ANNESLEY OF SURAT AND HIS TIMES

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THE TRUE STORY OF THE MYTHICAL WESLEY FORTUNE

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"Mr. John Wesley used to say to his nephews: 'You are heirs to a large property in India if you can find it out; for my uncle is said to have been very prosperous.'"—Dr. Adam Clarke, in *Memoirs of the Wesley Family*.

Mukerji

PREFACE

THIS work supplements in some important particulars the story of the rise of British influence in Asia told in *Early English Adventurers in the East.* In that volume, in tracing the course of events in Western India, I carried the narrative no further than the occupation of Bombay. Here I deal with the half-century which followed Gerald Aungier's successful administration of the island after its transfer from the Crown to the East India Company.

It was not a period upon which we can look back with satisfaction. Indeed, it may be regarded as the dark age of Anglo-Indian history—an era in which the British name and prestige were degraded to a lower level than was ever reached in that region either before or since. Yet it was a time of extraordinary interest from the standpoint of British expansion, and if there is gloom in the record, and if shameful episodes are constantly occurring, the narrative closes with the promise of higher and better things in the gallant and, as it proved, effective assertion of British power at Surat in 1732 by Henry Lowther, a scion of the famous

house from which the present Speaker of the House of Commons sprung.

In this book, as in the earlier production, I have written the story from the standpoint of personality, endeavouring rather to bring out the play of individual efforts than to trace the course of general movements. I have done this because it has long appeared to me that if you would interest people, and especially young people, in history, it is essential that you should put before them vivid pictures of human interest which will arouse their curiosity and stimulate their imagination, and lead them by natural stages to a study of the deeper influences which have been at work in the moulding of events. So far as this work is concerned I have found the greater inducement to adopt this method of treating the subject because the personal factor throughout was remarkably predominant. Across the stage of British endeavour in Western India stalked a succession of characters who were not merely of the play, but for the time being were *the* play. They were in many ways a shady company in whom the villains outnumbered the heroes, but it was their province to make history, and extremely interesting history, too, as the reader who honours me by perusing these pages will find.

The story is written around the life of one of those seventeenth-century worthies—Samuel Annesley by name—who was a very prominent

figure at Surat, in Western India, during the whole period treated in the text. Annesley was by no means an engaging character; in fact, he was deemed by certain of his contemporaries to have in his nature something of the rogue, and that opinion may find endorsement by posterity. But it was his fate to be involved in most of the dramatic occurrences which sorely marred the lives of the British on the Western Coast of India in the years dealt with, and more than any other man of his time he typified the class of merchant adventurer who in the service of the East India Company, and out of it, lived and traded at the Indian ports two centuries ago. Moreover, an extraordinary interest attaches to his career owing to his connection (through the marriage of his sister to the Rev. Samuel Wesley, the father of John Wesley) with the Wesley family, and still more by reason of the mystery by which his last days and death were surrounded by all the Wesley biographers.

I may state that my attention was first attracted to Annesley's career by the accidental discovery a few years ago, amongst the Indian records, of the wills of Annesley and his wife. These documents (quoted on pp. 332–333), with their literal "cutting off with a shilling" of the Rector of Epworth and his family, were such convincing evidence of the falsity of the long-established Wesley tradition that Annesley had "disappeared,"

leaving somewhere in India a vast fortune which the Wesley descendants might enjoy, if only they could discover it, that I ventured to give them publicity in the columns of *The Guardian*. The private letters I subsequently received showed how strong a hold the idea of the mythical Wesley millions had obtained.

One of the descendants of Wesley was almost pathetic in her anxiety to know whether, after all, I might not be mistaken in my facts. She could not persuade herself that the fortune in which generations of the Wesleys had believed was the absolute myth which I proved it to be. These manifestations of interest led me to make a close study of Annesley's career, with the results which are now presented to the reader. It is with regret that I have plucked out the heart of the fascinating mystery which Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch has used with such powerful effect in his charming work *Hetty Wesley*. But I find some compensatory satisfaction in the thought that in widening the popular knowledge of Samuel Annesley I have thrown a strong and, to some extent, a new light on a most important era in British Indian history.

I may take this opportunity of explaining that the facts of my narrative are almost exclusively derived from the Indian Records in Whitehall, a close study of which I have made during the last ten years. Excepting in a few instances I have not

thought it necessary to indicate in the text the precise source of my authority. It may therefore be desirable to state here that I have relied chiefly upon the following series of records :—

Home Series. Miscellaneous (Transcripts relating to Bombay), Vols.48 to 56, also Vols. 29, 332 and others in The General Series.

Surat Factory Records, Vols. 1 to 9, also Vols. 100, 101 and others.

Bombay Abstract Letters Received Vols. 1, 1a.

Bombay Copies of Wills, etc., Registered in Mayors Court 29th June, 1728, to 3rd June, 1732, Range CCCCXVI, No. 77.

Original Correspondence, Vols. 43, 44, 52, 53 and others.

Orme MS., Vols. 122 to 128.

Additional MS., British Museum.

In conducting my researches I was granted every facility by the India Office authorities, and I have again to acknowledge with sincere gratitude the courtesy of Mr. F. W. Thomas, the Librarian, and his assistants, and the prompt attention given to all my inquiries by Mr. Wm. Foster, the keeper of the Records, and his staff.

I have also to thank the Speaker (the Right Hon. J. W. Lowther, M.P.) for courteously furnishing information relative to Henry Lowther, the eighteenth-century worthy referred to above. I have, further, to express my great indebtedness to Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch for kindly permitting the reproduction of the extracts from "Hetty Wesley" given in the Prologue.

LONDON, *October*, 1917.

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PROLOGUE

(*From Dr. Adam Clarke's " Memoirs of the Wesley Family.*")

"SAMUEL (ANNESLEY) went abroad in the service of the East India Company. He there accumulated a considerable fortune and made frequent remittances to his family at home. He had borne strong testimony against the mismanagement and speculations of certain persons in the Company's service, which probably created him mortal enemies. Intending to return home, he wrote to his brother-in-law, Mr. Samuel Wesley, to purchase for him an estate of £200 or £300 per annum somewhere between London and Oxford. But it seems he suddenly disappeared and no account was ever received of his person or property! The very time of his coming home, and the ship by which he was to come, were announced; and his sister, Mrs. Susanna Wesley, came to London expecting to meet him, but no brother appeared when the ship arrived! And all the information that was ever received was to this effect:—that he had gone up into the country and was never

heard of more! (When the noises[1] were heard in the Parsonage at Epworth Mrs. Wesley supposed they betokened the death of her brother in India; but it is certain that he was alive several years after those noises ceased at Epworth.) There is most certainly a mystery in this transaction, which it is possible a future day may explain. Mr. John Wesley used to say to his nephews: 'You are heirs to a large property in India if you can find it out, for my uncle is said to have been very prosperous.'"—p. 244.

"In the hands of a good investigator this letter (from Susanna Wesley to Samuel Annesley, quoted at page 317) might lead to some discovery relative to the *end* of Mr. Annesley, and *where* his property has been left and *who* has possessed it. That there were nefarious transactions in the management of the Company's concerns at that time the above letter sufficiently states; and that Mr. Annesley's honesty might have led to his ruin is a possible one. That he should disappear and never more be heard of, and that his property should all have been lost, are mysteries which probably at this distance of time cannot entirely be cleared up; but some discovery may yet be made."—*Id.* p. 246.

"In the year 1724 it was reported that Mr. Annesley was coming home in one of the Company's

[1] The mysterious noises were heard at the Epworth Rectory in the years 1715–16.—AUTHOR.

ships. Mrs. Wesley, hearing the news, came up from Epworth to London to meet him, but the report was incorrect. This is the last mention I find of Mr. Samuel Annesley in any of the family papers which have come under my notice. Nor is there any certainty when he died. We know he was alive in 1712 and possibly in 1720 or 1721. Mrs. Wesley's letter to him is dated January 20, 1722—his, to which it is an answer, was most probably written in 1720. It is likely that his wife died before him and that there were no children; hence the Wesley family always supposed they were his heirs."—*Id.*, p. 251.

(*From "The Life and Times of the Rev. Samuel Wesley, M.A.," by L. Tyerman.*)

"Samuel (Annesley) went abroad in the service of the East India Company, accumulated a considerable fortune and intended to return to England; but all at once he suddenly disappeared and no account was ever received either of his person or of his property. The probability is that he was robbed and murdered."

(*From "Susanna Wesley," by J. H. Ingham; Eminent Women Series.*)

"In going out to India Mr. Annesley hoped to amass a fortune, and is supposed to have done so, though at the time he was expected to return to England he was lost sight of, and no intelligence

of his fate, nor any of the money he had obtained, ever reached his relatives."—p. 128.

(*From "Hetty Wesley," by Sir A. T. Quiller-Couch.*)

"At Surat, by a window of his private office in the East India Company's factory, a middle-aged man stared out upon the broad river and the wharves below. Business in the factory had ceased for the day: clerks and porters had gone about their own affairs, and had left the great building strangely cool and empty and silent. The wharves, too, were deserted—all but one, where a Hindu sat in the shade of a pile of luggage, and the top of a boat's mast wavered like the index of a balance above the edge of the landing stairs.

"The luggage belonged to the middle-aged man at the window: the boat was to carry him down the river to the *Albemarle* East Indiaman anchored in the roads with her Surat cargo aboard. She would sail that night for Bombay and thence away for England.

"He was ready; dressed for his journey in a loose white suit, which, though designed for the East, was almost aggressively British. . . . He wore no wig (though the date was 1723), but his own grey hair, brushed smoothly back from a sufficiently handsome forehead and tied behind with a fresh black ribbon. . . .

"The ceremonies of leave-taking were done

with; so far as he could, he had avoided them. He had ever been a hard man, and knew well enough that the clerks disliked him. He hated humbug. He had come to India almost forty years ago, not to make friends but to make a fortune. And now the fortune was made, and the room behind him stood ready, spick and span, for the Scotsman who would take his chair to-morrow. . . .

"On board the *Albemarle* Mr. Annesley found the best cabin prepared for him, as became his importance. He went below at once, and was only seen at meal times during the short voyage to Bombay. . . . Here Captain Bowes was to take in the bulk of his passengers and cargo, and brought his vessel close alongside the Bund. During the three days occupied in loading and stowing little order was maintained, and the decks lay open to a promiscuous crowd of coolies and porters, waterside loafers, beggars and thieves. . . .

"The first two days Mr. Annesley spent upon the poop, watching the mob with a certain scornful interest. On the third day he did not appear, but was served with tiffin in his cabin. At about six o'clock the second mate—a Mr. Orchard—sought the captain to report that all was ready and waiting the word to cast off. His way led past Mr. Annesley's cabin, and there he came upon an old mendicant stooping over the door handle and making as if to enter and beg; whom he clouted over

the shoulders and cuffed up the companion ladder. Mr. Orchard afterwards remembered to have seen this same beggar, or the image of him, off and on, during the two previous days asquat against a post on the Bund, and watching the *Albemarle*, with his crutch and bowl beside him.

"When the rush came, this old man, bent and blear eyed, was swept along the gangway like a chip on the tide. In pure lightness of heart a sailor, posted at the head of the plank, expedited him with a kick. 'That'll do for good-bye to India,' said he, grinning.

"The old man showed no resentment, but was borne along bewildered, gripping his bowl to his breast. On the quay's edge he seemed to find his feet, and shuffled off towards the town, without once looking back at the ship."

* * * * *

(After the *Albemarle's* arrival in England.)

"That same evening, in Mr. Matthew Wesley's parlour, Johnson's Court, Captain Bowes told the whole story—or so much of it as he knew. The disappearance from on board his ship of a person so important as Mr. Samuel Annesley touched his prospects in the Company's service, and he did not conceal it. He had already reported the affair at the East India House, and was looking forward to a highly uncomfortable interview with the Board of Governors. . . .

"The Captain nodded back, set down his glass and resumed. 'Quite so. The next thing is that Mr. Orchard, returning to deck two minutes later and having to pass the door of Mr. Annesley's cabin on his way, ran against an old Hindu beggar crouching there, fingering the door handle and about to enter—or so Orchard supposed, and kicked him up the companion. He told me about it himself the next day when we found the cabin empty, and I began making inquiries. "Now here," says you, "here's a clue," and I'm not denying but it may be one. Only, when you look into it, what does it amount to? Mr Annesley—saving your presence—was known for a stern man: you may take it for certain he'd made enemies over there, and these Hindus are the devil (saving your presence again, ma'am) for nursing a grudge. "Keep a stone in your pocket seven years; turn it, keep it for another seven; 'twill be ready at hand for your enemy"—that's their way. But, to begin with, an old *jogi* is nothing strange to meet on a ship before she clears: these beggars in the East will creep in anywhere. And, next, you'll hardly maintain that an old beggarman ("seventy years old, if a day" said Orchard) was going to take an active man like Mr. Annesley and cram him bodily through a cabin window! 'Tis out of nature. And yet when we broke into the cabin, twenty-four hours later, there was not a trace of him: only his boxes neatly packed, his

watch hanging to the beam and just running down, a handful of gold and silver tossed on to the bunk—just as he might have emptied it from his pockets—nothing else, and the whole cabin as neat as a pin.' "

*   *   *   *   *

" Mrs. Wesley sat tapping the mahogany gently with her finger-tips. 'To my thinking the key of this mystery, if there be one, lies at Surat. My brother had powerful enemies: his letters make that clear. We must inquire into them—their numbers and the particular grudge they bore him—and also into the state of his mind. He was not the sort of person to be kidnapped in open day.'

" —— 'By a Thames waterman, for instance, madam?' said Captain Bowes jocularly, but instantly changed his tone. 'You suggest he may have disappeared on his own account? To avoid his enemies, you mean?'

" 'As to his motives, sir, I say nothing; but it certainly looks to me as if he had planned to give you the slip.'

" 'Tut tut!' exclaimed Matthew (Wesley). 'And left his money behind? Not likely!' "

*   *   *   *   *

(Some years later.)

" The man sat, naked to the waist, at the entrance of a low cave or opening in the hillside.

He seemed to be of great age, with a calm and almost unwrinkled face and grey locks falling to his shoulders, around which hung a rosary of black beads, very highly polished and flashing against the sun. From the waist down he was wrapped in a bright shawl, and beside him lay a crutch and a wooden bowl heaped with rice and conserves.

"Before the two Britons could master their dismay, Bhagwan Dass had run towards the cave and was imploring the holy man to give them shelter and hiding. For a while he listened merely, and his first response was to lift the bowl and invite them with a gesture to stay their hunger. Famished though they were they hesitated, and reading the reason in their eyes, he spoke for the first time.

"'It will not harm you,' said he in Hindustani: 'and the villagers below bring me more than I can eat.'

"From the moment of setting eyes on him . . . a blessed sense of protection fell upon the party; a feeling that in the hour of extreme need God had suddenly put out a shield, under the shadow of which they might rest in perfect confidence. And, indeed, though they knew the mountain to be swarming with their enemies, they entered the cave and slept all that day like children."

"He turned and walked swiftly from them, mounting the slope with swift loose strides. But

while they stared, Bhagwan Dass broke from them and ran in pursuit.

"'Not without thy blessing! O Annesley sahib, go not before thou hast blessed me!'

"Two days later, at sunset, a child watching a little below the hermit's spring saw him limp back to it and drink and seat himself again at the entrance of the cave; and pelted down to the village with the news. And the people, who had supposed him gone for ever, swarmed up and about the cave to assure themselves.

"'Alas!' said the holy man, gazing out upon the twilight when at length all had departed leaving him in peace. 'Cannot a man be anywhere alone with God? And yet,' he added, 'I was something wistful for their love.'"

(A century after Annesley's disappearance.)

"'See here, Ellerton, the rock is caverned and the gun must have broken through the roof. It doesn't look to me like a natural cavern, either. Hi! half a dozen of you, clear away this rubbish and let me have a nearer look.'

"The men turned to and heaved away the fallen stones under which the water oozed muddily.

"'Just as I thought! Nature never made a hole like this.'

"An exclamation interrupted him. It came from one of the relief party who had clambered

into the cavern and was spading there in the loose soil.

"'What is it?'

"'A skeleton, sir!—Stretched here as natural as life.'

"The General dismounted and clambered to the entrance, followed by his staff officer. As they reached it, the man stooped again and rose with something in his hand.

"'Eh? a begging bowl?'

"'Not a doubt of it,' said the staff officer, as his chief passed it to him. He examined it, turning it slowly over in his hands. 'It's clear enough, though curious. We have struck the den of some old hermit of the hills, some holy man——'

"'Who pitched his camp here for the sake of the water spring, no doubt.'

"'Queer taste,' said the staff officer sagely. 'I wonder how the deuce he picked up his food?'

"'Oh, the hill men hereabouts will travel leagues to visit and feed such a man.'

"'That doesn't explain why his bones lie unburied.'

"'No.' The General mused for a moment. 'Found anything else?' he demanded sharply.

"The searchers reported 'Nothing,' and wished to know if they should bring the skeleton out into the light.

"'No, cover him up decently and fall in to limber up the gun.'"

CHAPTER I

Samuel Annesley Proceeds to India

India a great attraction for adventurous young Englishmen in the period following the Restoration—The East India Company's policy at the time officially described as "Trade, not Grandeur"—The Company nevertheless eager to possess attributes of sovereignty—Establishment of a mint at Bombay—Annesley and two other youths appointed to work the mint machinery—Annesley's ancestry—Embarkation for India—A curiously assorted company as fellow-passengers—Soldiers—Women emigrants—Speculations as to Annesley's marriage.

IN the period following the Restoration the service of the East India Company had many attractions for the adventurous young Englishman to whom a long period of exile presented no terrors. Those were years in which the English for the first time effected a lodgment in India in circumstances offering some assurance of permanency. Fort St. George, erected on the sandy wastes of the Coromandel Coast, was already attracting to itself a population and industry worthy of the future City of Madras. On the

western coast the island of Bombay, part of the dower of Charles II's hapless bride, in like fashion was witnessing the establishment on sound foundations of a commercial and manufacturing centre destined in a later generation to be second to none in Asia.

Further north on the same coast, at Surat, the English were masters of a trade which embraced a wide range of merchandise and whose ramifications extended on one side to the Persian Gulf and the Red Sea, and on the other to the Malayan States and those parts of the Eastern Archipelago where the jealous scrutiny of the Dutch could be evaded. The Company's influence was steadily increasing as fresh spheres of action were entered upon and more of the nerve centres of Eastern trade were touched.

For the first time, perhaps, the fascination of India cast its spell upon the English people. Moved by the charm of Milton's sonorous verse men turned their eyes to "the Gorgeous East," ready to recognise in the developments of their country's power in that quarter a revival of the glories of the Elizabethan period when Drake and Raleigh and Hawkins were opening a new world to English commerce. "The wealth of Ormuz and of Ind" was a powerful lure, but it was not the only attraction. The spirit of pure adventure deep down in the national temperament was stirred by prevailing influences to manifestations

of no ordinary character. Aristocratic youths,[1] pioneers of a noble race of hunters, braved the perils and discomforts of the Eastern passage for a spell of big-game shooting in that paradise of the sportsman, Southern India. Lads of respectable parentage,[2] concealing themselves on the Company's ships, stole out to India intent on making acquaintance at first hand with the wonders of the mysterious East. Meanwhile, into the Company's service poured in continuous stream some of the best young blood of the country. The regular emoluments offered were on a miserable scale, but there was conclusive evidence of the lucrativeness of an Indian career in the positions which returned Anglo-Indians filled in the fash-

[1] Lord Goring was one of these early big-game hunters. With a companion, a German of good family, he went out to India in the later years of the seventeenth century. He died on the voyage home after spending three years in the country—at Karwar, then as now a good centre from which to conduct sporting expeditions.

[2] The following entry from the Records supplies an example of this surreptitious Indian touring in the seventeenth century: "Mr. Edmond Woodroff, a druggist, who went to Bombay on ye Diana without his father's knowledge, who is a person of quality and designed his preferment here, and having apply'd to us that his son might return or be employed by ye Company we order that on information of his qualifications, sobriety and seriousness, you do imploy him as may best serve us or else send him home by ye next shipping; his father or hee will satisfy the charges of his transportation."—Letter to the Bombay Council from the Court of Directors, 11 Sept., 1689.—Home Misc., Vol. 29.

ionable world. This class was not so numerous, nor was it so wealthy as the Nabob fraternity of a later era, when Clive, made immensely rich by the fruits of his conquests, was "astonished at his own moderation" as he contemplated in retrospect the prolific field in which he had laboured and fought.

The exiles, however, included men of considerable distinction who impressed their personalities upon a world markedly deficient in the elements of experience and wide and varied knowledge to which they could lay special claim. So it happened that Indian openings were eagerly sought by the aspiring youth of the time. Some like Thomas Pitt, the progenitor of Chatham and his illustrious son—"the Pilot that weathered the storm"—who were ambitious, made a short cut to wealth by defying the Company and embarking on enterprises of their own within the prohibited sphere of Eastern trade; others of the type of the hero of the present work were invested with the sacred thread of the Company's hierarchy and became "Covenanted Servants." The two classes, though separated by an impassable gulf in the Book of Principles of India House, had much in common as later pages will show. But it was the regular official body that attracted naturally the larger number of aspirants to an Indian career, and for the time being it is the one with which we are exclusively concerned.

India at the beginning of the fourth quarter of the seventeenth century, when the story opens, was to the East India Company in a marked degree still a land of doubt in all that concerned policy. Not without good reason did the directors hesitate to adopt a definite line. Profound changes were taking place in the internal organisation of the country the end of which no man could foresee. There was then proceeding one of those elemental movements which occur once every few hundred years to remind the world of the transitoriness of the mightiest empires. Mogul power, which had reached its zenith a few decades before in Shah Jehan's splendid reign, was now, under Aurungzebe's oppressive rule, visibly on the wane. At Agra and Delhi the sculptured glories of that most opulent period of Indo-Saracenic art in which men, to use Heber's phrase, "built like Titans and finished like jewellers," were still in their pristine grandeur. But the Mogul Government itself was stricken with a mortal disease of whose incurable character every new decade furnished additional proofs.

The peril which threatened it came from the formidable revival of Hindu power under Mahratta auspices, which—originating in the internecine warfare conducted between the Mogul Emperors and the Mohammedan dynasties of the South, Ahmednugger and Bijapur,—had derived new strength from the consummate leadership of Sivaji

the great Mahratta leader. This redoubtable chieftain rallied to his banners all the fighting elements of the virile race from which he sprung, and by force of character and military qualities of no common order welded them into a weapon of aggression of terrible efficiency in the then conditions of India. Mounted on fleet wiry horses, living like locusts on the country which they traversed, these hardy guerilla warriors by their swift movements and daring tactics were able with practical impunity to defy the Imperial power. The full trial of strength between the panoplied might of the Mogul Government and the Mahratta hosts had yet to come at the period of which we are treating, but the menace was there in all its sinister significance, and already the handwriting was beginning to appear on the wall.

In such circumstances the Court of Directors, even if no other grounds existed for caution, would justifiably have moved with circumspection. But apart altogether from the state of affairs in India the conditions were not favourable to the adoption of a bold policy, or indeed any policy at all other than that of making the best of trading opportunities as they offered themselves. Plain merchants intent on successful barter, they regarded their valuable possessions of Bombay and Madras almost entirely in the light of useful centres at which profitable business was to be done free from the costly restraints and irksome disabilities experi-

enced at their factories settled on native territory. Their sovereign rights pleased them when it came to a question of exercising authority, but they shrunk from the payment of the inevitable price of conquest even when it assumed the peaceful form it did in these instances. "Trade, not grandeur, is our object," wrote the Court to Gerald Aungier, the able Governor of Bombay, a year or two prior to the time of the opening of our narrative. Poor Aungier had done his plain duty by fortifying Bombay, and the mercantile minded gentry at India House winced at the bill. But it was not long, as we shall find, before the tune changed in that quarter and the depreciatory view of the Company's rôle gave place to a blusterous assertiveness. Meanwhile, though the directors were humbly disposed when they surveyed their responsibilities in the light of the latest bill of costs for fortifications and other indispensable paraphernalia of sovereignty, they were ready, and, indeed, eager to make experiments in Government and assume all the attributes of absolute power.

One of their cherished projects from the earliest years of the occupation of Bombay was the establishment of a mint. They attached a value to this institution as a source of profit rather than as a symbol of sovereignty and it was developed on these lines. At the outset the Bombay Mint was chiefly occupied in the production of copper coins and tin tokens known as *budje rooks* which then,

and for a great many years subsequently, were a common form of currency at the Indian ports and in Malaya and the Eastern Archipelago. These initial efforts were so far successful financially that the Court determined to make the minting of coin a more definite object of their Indian adventure, and to this end sought and obtained from Charles II formal power in the new charter granted by that monarch to establish a mint at Bombay.

The equipment of the new, or, to speak more correctly, the reorganised institution then engaged their attention, and they procured from English makers machinery for milling coin of the type employed in the Royal Mint. To ensure the successful working of the somewhat complicated apparatus the Court adopted the expedient of giving a preliminary training in its use to three youths who had joined its service for employment in the East. One of the trio was Samuel Annesley, the central figure of this story, who at the time in 1677, when he stepped across the threshold of the old India House to receive his credentials as a covenanted servant of the Company, was of the age of nineteen years.

The youthful cadet thus selected bore a name honoured and respected in the England of that day. The eldest son of Dr. Samuel Annesley, the well-known Dissenting divine, the friend of Defoe and the intellectual exponent of the most cultured

form of Nonconformity then in vogue, he belonged to the very elect of the Nonjuring flock. His family descended from the same stock as that of the Earls of Anglesey, and his father, according to his contemporaries, showed in his fine features and dignified bearing the outward marks of aristocratic lineage.

Samuel Annesley the younger probably enjoyed the usual educational advantages of a well-to-do city-bred youth of his day. His letters show him to have been a man with some capacity for literary expression, and he possessed a knowledge of accounts which could not have been picked up casually in the intervals of his other duties. With fair confidence we may assume that he owed his appointment to the Company's service to his father's friendship with members of the Court of Directors. The Puritan element in the higher ranks of the Company was strong at this period, and it is certain that a good many of the directors had at one time or another "sat under" Dr. Annesley, either when he was Vicar of St. Giles's, Cripplegate, from 1658 to 1662, or later, after his ejection from the living, when he was the much-esteemed minister of the famous meeting-house in Little St. Helen's Place, Bishopsgate.[1]

[1] "The first public ordination held by the Nonconformists after the Bartholomew Act was performed in the Chapel. Dr. Calamy was one of those ordained on this occasion. . . . The first Minister here was Dr. Samuel Annesley, the grandfather of John and Charles Wesley. The father of Daniel

In any event Dr. Annesley had sufficient influence to obtain the ear of the authorities at India House, and the selection of his son was almost certainly made with a full recognition of the impeccable character of the lad's parentage, for the Company set great store upon the godliness of its agents and never lost an opportunity of preaching in its despatches to the East the virtues of high thinking and pious living. Its confidence in the outward signs of righteousness was often sadly betrayed by worthless servants whose hypocritical graces had earlier won approbation, but the insistence on a respectable upbringing which went hand in hand with the enforcement of the directors' standards of piety did undoubtedly contribute to the elevation of the status of the Company's service. Men like the two Oxendens of Surat, Gerald Aungier, Streynsham Master and others of these older Anglo-Indian officials who could be named, were the equals in every respect of the high-minded men who in a later generation worked and died in the service of the Government of India.

It is clear from the records that the directors were deeply concerned in the successful working of their mint venture. In two separate communications forwarded in March, 1678, they referred in some detail to the coining machinery. They intimated that it was intended for the

Defoe worshipped in this church and also the son."—*The Churches and Chapels of Old London*, by J. G. White.

manufacture of milled money, and they complacently expressed the anticipation that this new style of coin would be much appreciated in India. Mention was made of the training which Annesley and two other cadets, George Cook and John Morris, had received, and a special injunction was laid upon the officials in Bombay to see that the keys for working the machinery were always in responsible hands. In order that there might be no failure of plans a copy of directions for the use of the machinery was transmitted, with the observation that "though they (the machines) have cost us a very great summe of money yet wee hope by your industry they will be improved to our advantage." As will be discovered later, the directors' sanguine expectations were falsified. About the last of the needs of the Bombay executive when the consignment reached its destination was a coinage plant.

Apparently Annesley sailed for India about the time these letters were despatched. We may picture the scene which accompanied his departure. The Indiaman, a taut ship of not more than 500 tons, is straining at her moorings at Blackwall awaiting the signal to cast off which will be given by the captain when presently he comes on board with his final instructions from India House. About the decks is a mass of impedimenta—passengers' baggage and the rest—awaiting stowage as soon as opportunity offers, which will be later

when the vessel is dropping down the river with the tide. In the waist of the ship and on the poop are gathered in groups the passengers and their friends who have come to bid what for many of them will be a last farewell, for the Indian climate, or more correctly speaking the Englishman's mode of life in the East, claims a heavy toll at this time.

Our hero has his own party of friends from the shore to speed his departure. Conspicuous in the throng is his father's tall figure, upright still in spite of the weight of nearly three score and ten years that it carries. His mother, too, would have been there and some of the many brothers and sisters of the young cadet. Amongst the latter may have been Susanna, a little fair-haired, bright-eyed girl of nine, who ten years later was to wed Samuel Wesley the elder, and through that union to become the mother of John Wesley, the great founder of Methodism.

Samuel Wesley himself was possibly also a participator in the scene. He was then at school at Mr. Morton's famous academy at Newington Green, and as the ties of intimacy between prominent Nonjuring families were strong, he was probably a playmate of the Annesley children at their home in Bishopsgate. The venerable father would no doubt have tendered his son a few words of parting advice and exhortation couched in the well-chosen language which he knew so well how to employ. The mother, pale and apprehensive

for the future of her first-born, must have added her affectionate wishes for his safety and happiness in the strange land to which he was proceeding, while little Susanna in her calm serious way would have offered her tribute of childish regret at the loss of a big brother whom she possibly looked up to after the manner of sisters. How the prospective exile himself was affected we can only surmise. In after-life he was known pre-eminently as a hard man, and it is possible that his dour nature withstood the sentimental influences which were crowding in upon him in that farewell interview in which he took what was to be in the full sense of the term final leave of his family and country.

Annesley's voyage to India was uneventful as Indian voyages usually were at that period. The old horrors of the passage were to a large extent only evil memories. Scurvy, which formerly decimated the crews, had been almost completely banished by the use of antiscorbutics and the adoption of a more rational dietary. The ships were of better lines than the earlier ones and their handling left little to be desired, for the crews were of the first breed of seamen which sailed the seas in that or any age, and their commanders were men of great proficiency in navigation and skilled in the arts of offence and defence, a knowledge of which was then supremely important as a qualification for a command in the Company's service.

An East Indiaman of that day and for generations to come, in point of fact, was a man-of-war in all but name. It carried a crew out of all proportion to its needs as a simple merchantman, and it was armed quite as heavily as the King's vessels of the same tonnage. This militant character had been imposed upon the Company's fleet from the first by the violence of the rivalry between nations for the Eastern trade. In succession the Company's ships had fought the Portuguese and the Dutch, and soon they were to be called upon to meet the splendid ships of the France of Louis XIV, when that monarch's bid for world dominion carried the Bourbon lilies across the seas to the East and Francois Martin laid the foundation of Pondicherry.

The ships trading with India towards the close of the seventeenth century carried a curiously assorted company. In addition to returning officials and probationers like Annesley and his companions there were to be found on every East Indiaman recruits for the Company's military forces at their Eastern settlements. For the most part raw youths lured from the purlieus of the Thames-side by the glitter of the East, as it was presented to them in the freely squandered wages of the returned seaman, or men of dubious character who "left their country for their country's good" under the pressure of circumstances too strong to be resisted, they formed a motley and

somewhat unsavoury company. The sternly applied discipline of the ship kept their ungovernable instincts within bounds while they were on the sea.

But on landing they threw off all restraint and a large proportion of them fell victims to their excesses in the earliest stage of their Indian careers. Where actual debauchery did not exact its penalty, climatic influences stepped in to work their fell strength on the constitutions of these hapless Englishmen. Miserably housed, improperly clothed and fed, and careless of the rules of conduct which govern the well-regulated lives of Europeans in the tropics, they died off like flies from "fever and flux"—the sinister twin evils which darkly shadow the records of these early days of English settlement of the East. Even seen through the mist of years, this sacrifice of English life, largely through indifference and neglect, has an inexpressibly sad aspect. The wonder is that with the appalling tale of mortality to be found in every despatch that went from the India of these days the Company was able to obtain new recruits for its military service.

It was not on the military side exclusively that the Company was reinforcing the ranks of the English in its new settlement at Bombay at this juncture. From the time (in 1668) that the administration had been taken over from the Crown the Court of Directors had entertained the idea of colonising the island with English. They sent

out in successive batches numbers of young English women on the assumption that they would wed their civil and military servants, and in time create a flourishing English community which would be a tower of strength for them in the furtherance of their trade designs. No stranger delusion ever entered the heads of the merchants of Leadenhall Street than that on these lines a tropical settlement could be created.

The futility of the scheme was early demonstrated. Some of the better class of the female immigrants married officials, but the less fortunate were left on the hands of the Government, and just before Annesley went out the Council in Bombay wrote home making a special appeal to the Court for power to alleviate the sufferings of these unfortunate creatures, warning the unctuous gentry at India House that unless support was given them "they must either starve or do worse, having not a groat to help themselves." The trouble appears to have been that the women, perhaps not unnaturally, wanted to marry into the higher ranks of the officials. "Those that come out yearly, be they what they will at their arrival," wrote the Bombay Council, "all pretend to be gentlewomen, high born, great parentage and relations, and scorne to marry under a factor or commission officer, though ready to starve."

The directors would listen to none of this nonsense. They grudgingly granted an allowance

to the women with clothes "according to the countrie fashion," but in forwarding a fresh consignment of women—they were invoiced after the fashion of bales of goods—they intimated that they sent with them a list setting forth their "qualitie and condition, for whatsoever they may pretend when they come thither they appear no other here." As there had been complaints of the conduct of some of the earlier immigrants a further intimation was given that none were sent but "such as are civill," and an injunction was laid upon the Bombay Council that if any misbehaved themselves they were to be sent home, for "wee are sensible of the mischief of bad example," added the directors.

Amongst Annesley's fellow-passengers were a party of these female colonists, and we may permit ourselves the speculation that during the voyage he made the acquaintance amongst them of his future wife. We cannot say this for certain, as there is no record of his marriage, but he must have entered into the wedded state at an early stage in his Indian career, and as he was limited in his selection to a very small class, the chances are that he found the woman who was to be his partner in life from those female passengers who had been associated with him in the close intimacy that a long voyage brings.

It is a curious fact, and one which may be noted here, that no mention is made in the records until the close of his life of Mrs. Annesley. The circum-

stance is the more remarkable as every year a list of European inhabitants at the Company's settlements was sent home. The explanation may be that Mrs. Annesley resided during the greater part of her married life either at Surat or in England. The Surat names are few, confined for the most part to officials and "free merchants," and from omissions which are clear on the face of the records it is to be surmised that the Company did not require an exact register of the female portion of the community resident outside their own territory. Not, however, that the directors were indifferent to the domestic ties of their servants. They not only exercised a more or less rigid supervision over the prospective brides who went out to the East, but apparently, through their President, they exercised the right of vetoing any union which the local Council deemed unsuitable.

A case in point is supplied by an incident which figures in the records at a somewhat later period than that at which the narrative opens. While Sir John Gayer, the then Governor of Bombay, was at Surat an appeal was forwarded to him from one of the Company's officials on the island for permission to marry the widow of a brother official. The lady's character, judging from the rude epithet applied to her in the official correspondence, was somewhat damaged, and though the lovelorn petitioner protested that unless he were allowed to marry he could not be happy, the stern Presi-

dent refused his sanction, observing that while there was only a possibility that his disappointment would mar his happiness, they presumed that he would be "inevitably miserable" if he were so foolish as to wed the too lively widow. In order to make their edict the more effective and to prevent "the utter ruine" of the applicant, Gayer directed that the woman should be deported from the island unless she had mended her ways. Later, a fresh and more urgent appeal being made by the prospective bridegroom, and an assurance being forthcoming from the Deputy-Governor that the widow had "much reformed," the marriage was permitted.

CHAPTER II

Aungier's Bombay

Annesley's landing in Bombay—A promising settlement created largely by the genius of Gerald Aungier—Aungier's tactful Government—He incurs the displeasure of the Court of Directors—Aungier's defence of his administration—His death and character—A great terror spreading over India owing to the rise of Mahratta power under Sivaji—Henry Oxenden's views of the Mahratta peril—A crisis precipitated by the seizure by the Mahrattas of the island of Kenery at the entrance of Bombay Harbour—Lieut. Thorpe's disastrous expedition to Kenery—Capt. Richard Keigwin's subsequent victory over the Mahrattas near Kenery—The Court of Directors' hesitating instructions in regard to the Mahratta occupation of Kenery—The Bombay Council makes peace with Sivaji—Death of Sivaji—Aurungzebe's policy—Mogul occupation of Kenery—Annesley's transfer to Surat—The Bombay Militia—Cruel military discipline.

IN the early months of 1678 Annesley landed in Bombay. The settlement at which he spent the first period of his exile was a widely different place from the stately Imperial City which now forms "the Gate of India." At the most the inhabitants did not number more than fifty or sixty thousand and these were scattered over the island,

though the majority were crowded in the native town clustered about the fort, the walls of which were then approaching completion. Still, it was a fair prospect for the young Englishman to look upon—this promising town by the blue waters of the beautiful harbour over which the sunlight danced with a joyous brilliancy very fascinating to one whose eyes had been accustomed to the subdued radiance of a Western sun reflected in the muddy waters of the Pool hard by London Bridge.

Those were not days when from every point of vantage in the ocean floated the national flag in token of the country's power. Only a short time previously a victorious Dutch squadron had swept up the Medway and inflicted upon England the most humiliating reverse it had sustained at sea for generations. English power and prestige in Charles II's careless hands were at their lowest ebb, and one looked in vain in Europe for evidence of that dominance which a few years earlier under Cromwell's masterly *régime* was almost everywhere apparent. Only here in India could the spirit of the race be traced in anything like a character worthy of its high purpose. For the Bombay which Annesley saw with his first glimpse of India was one of those early miracles of Imperial achievement of which the present generation of Britons knows unfortunately too little.

It was the creation of one man's genius and painstaking statesmanship pursued with patient endea-

vour in the face of the obstructions and discouragements of an ignorant and narrow-minded oligarchy at home and the opposition of a jealous and quarrelsome officialdom on the spot. Misgovernment and an ill-conceived economy in later years served to dissipate the heritage of power which had been built up at this incomparable strategic and commercial centre, but nothing that happened can dim the lustre of the work of Gerald Aungier, the great administrator who was the true founder of Bombay.

Gerald Aungier died at Surat only a few months before Annesley reached India. Aungier came of the Irish family which gave the Earls of Longford to the peerage.[1] He served his apprenticeship in India under Sir George Oxenden, the able Chief

[1] Gerald Aungier was the grandson of Sir Francis Aungier, the Master of the Rolls in Ireland, who married Douglas, youngest sister of Gerald, Earl of Kintore, and who was elected to the peerage as Baron Aungier in the peerage of Ireland in 1621. On the death of the first peer the title descended to Dr. Ambrose, who married Griseld Aungier, the younger daughter of Lancelot Bulkeley, the Archbishop of Dublin. The Governor of Bombay was the second son of Dr. Aungier. Francis, Gerald's elder brother, was created Earl of Longford in 1677. This peer died without issue in 1700 and the family honours devolved upon his brother Ambrose, who died in 1704 also without issue. The Earldom of Longford then became extinct and the family estates descended to the late peer's sister, Mrs. Ludlow. Upon that lady's decease the property passed to the Earl of Longford's nephews, Francis Cuff and James Macartney, by an equal division. A granddaughter of the former married Thomas Pakenham, who became Earl of Longford in a revived creation.

of Surat, in the days of the factory's greatest prosperity, and it was from the same superior that he received his instructions for a special mission to Bombay when that island should have been taken over from the Portuguese in 1662. A man of high purpose, serenity of disposition, and with a wide outlook, Aungier was admirably adapted for the work of a pioneer in a new settlement. When he assumed supreme control of the Council's affairs in Western India on Oxenden's death in 1672 he devoted himself heart and soul to the establishment of the settlement on a firm basis.

For several years he laboured incessantly at the work, and out of somewhat chaotic conditions evolved a station which promised to become one of the finest centres of European effort in Asia. He was especially successful in his dealings with the Indian population. Under his just and gentle rule a polyglot community numbering many thousands drawn from all parts of the adjacent coast took root on the island. A peace-loving, industrious company, they looked up to the kindly English Governor and brought their disputes to him with a complete assurance that his decision would be an equitable one. The trust was never betrayed. Aungier in his policy ever held the balance equally between the various sections of the population. His measures were singularly far-sighted, anticipating the highest principles of British administration in a later and more settled

age. One of his acts was the establishment of a representative system by which each caste appointed a mouthpiece authoritatively to voice their wishes and discuss their grievances with him.

The general principles by which Aungier was guided in his administration are reflected in the instructions which he left to Philip Gyffard, his deputy, when he departed for Surat in September, 1675. Gyffard was to labour to the utmost of his power "to discountenance and punish vice," especially among the English, "though blessed be God they are much reformed of what they were." He was to prevent "all bribery, extortion, common barritting,[1] and vexatious causes of law," and in general he must "take care that all the inhabitants of what quality or condition soever have impartial justice done them without favour or respect of persons."

Aungier proceeded: "The people of the island consisting of several nations and languages disunited and disagreeing among themselves, you must endeavour to carry an equal hand of favour, justice and protection towards all, without preferring one before the other." In fine, Aungier anticipated in almost its language the noble Proclamation of Queen Victoria on the assumption of the Government of India by the Crown in 1858,

[1] *Barratry*: The practice of exciting and encouraging lawsuits.

a document which is held by Indians to be the charter of their rights.

In addition to being a clever administrator Aungier possessed a military capacity of no mean order. His qualities were severely tested in 1673, when Rickloff van Goens, the Dutch Admiral, appeared off the coast with a fleet of twenty-two ships with the intention of capturing Bombay. Immediately the Hollander's plans were disclosed the English Governor, to adopt the words of Orme the historian, "exerted himself with the calmness of a philosopher and the courage of a centurion" to meet the threatened attack. Defences were hastily thrown up at points where a landing could be effected, Aungier himself working at the excavations in order to stimulate the zeal of the inhabitants. Simultaneously the island Militia was reorganised and trained as far as the circumstances allowed for the important rôle allotted it of defending the new outworks. So effective were Aungier's dispositions that though Van Goens had on his ships no fewer than 6,000 Europeans, 1,000 of whom were soldiers, he never attempted a serious landing. Thus was averted the greatest danger that ever threatened Bombay of passing under foreign European domination.

Aungier, in spite of his splendid qualities, was not able to satisfy the exacting requirements of his masters. He had committed the unpardonable sin of extravagance—as that term was re-

garded at India House. True, the money he spent was used almost exclusively on fortifications and equipment indispensable in the then circumstances of Bombay. The sapient authorities in Leadenhall Street were oblivious to the exigency of the situation and attributed the expenditure to their Governor's soaring ambition. In a long carping despatch sent out they rated Aungier in set terms for his supposed arrogance of temperament. Nothing could have been wider of the mark than this attack and certainly nothing more unjust.

When Aungier received the despatch there lay upon him the shadow of mortal illness. Long residence in the tropics with the strain of an arduous and responsible position had nearly done their work. That his natural spirit was not abated, however, is shown by the terms of his reply to the ungenerous censure of his employers. In language which reflects the quiet contemplative temperament of the man, he set forth a defence which was unanswerable. Accepting their "prudent check with all humble thankfulness, for wee know it is designed for our good as well as your owne," he yet besought them to accept his representations according to their wonted candour.

"There is," he said, "a time and season for all things under the sunn: a time to plant, to build, to fortifye, to defend in war, to show the solemnity of government, to give God thanks for mercys

received and for their contrarys; and as there is a time soe there are proper means to be used according to number, weight, measure and place, the due application or misapplication whereof are the surest marks (if anything can be sure) to judge of human actions by."

"Their President," he went on to say, "during his three and a half years' service in Bombay hath by an unforeseen Providence been exercised in most of those facultys, not drawne thereto by fond humour, self-seeking, or exotic zeal, but by the necessity and contingency of your affairs wherein he hath observed the rule of time, measure and place to the best of his judgment; in the management whereof he hath by God's blessing much improved your interest and served his Majestie, the nation's and your right in the island, during the warr, to the hazzard of his life and fortunes. Nor can he accuse himself to have wronged you in your estate or broke your orders by vaine expense or used more grandure than his predecessors on this side, or equalls on the other side of India have done."

If he had erred through lack of experience it was no wonder, "when it was considered that his calling is a merchant, that he never professed himself a soldier, lawyer, philosopher, statesman, and much less a Governor. The times he acted in were perillous, subject to frequent chargeable overtures which nothing you nor he could see or

prevent; and, therefore, he doth chearfully expect your more candid aspect upon his labours when you are pleased to take a due cognisance of the whole affair. That as it becomes your wisdomes to think the worst of, and keep a jealous eye over a servant whom few of you doe know, and on actions which you did not expect, soe it will not misbecome your name now written on his forehead to make his case in some respect your owne, and consider how far ill grounded information or misprison ought to prevail against him; under which notion he hopes that accusations of grandure will fall, when you have fully examined his manner of life, for (however now oddly represented) he trusts in God to appeare noe such inconsiderate Sanca Panca as to play with that dangerous serpent, vanity, at your charge, since he knows well besides his accounts with God he must answer conscientiously to you also for what moneys shall be found so vainly expended."

"To conclude," said the writer, "we doe in all meekness entreat your Honours to entertain a more favourable construction of our services, that wee may for once rejoice in your benignity and serve God and you in our several stations with comfortable apprehension of your good eye towards us."

Aungier lived for more than a year after penning this pathetic and dignified defence of his policy. His contemporaries in announcing his death, which occurred on June 30, 1677, spoke feelingly

of his sufferings during his long illness and of the sorrow which his demise had caused to all who knew him. "His wisdom, eminent perfections and care of your affairs will better commend his worth than wee can tell how to describe him," observed the Council. They spoke truly. Aungier's best memorial was his work, which as the years went by demonstrated with ever accumulating force the soundness of his policy. This was the only memorial he ever had. After a perfunctory tribute of regret from the directors his name faded into oblivion.

Annesley arrived in India to find his occupation gone. The mint was there, and it was working after a fashion, but there was no call for additional coinage. The problem indeed was how to get rid of the money that was already minted. There was no scope for its circulation outside the island, and on the island itself the needs of the bazaar were day by day undergoing greater restriction. For a great terror was spreading over all India at this time. "Anarchical conditions hath soe extreamly altered the course and value of trade as is hardly credible," wrote the Bombay Council despondently in a letter sent to the directors in the closing days of 1678. The change from the fair prospects which had earlier offered by the occupation of Bombay was brought about by the rise of the redoubtable Sivaji, who was at the summit of his remarkable career of conquest at

the time that the young writer arrived in India. "What wee lament is," wrote Henry Oxenden, the then Deputy-Governor of Bombay, to his superiors at home, "that we cannot foresee any termination of his (Sivaji's) Government, for he still continues victorious even to a miracle, waging war with the potent Kings of Hindostan and Duccan (the Deccan), against which he hath hitherto proved successful and wee are fearful will continue soe."

Oxenden knew of whom he was writing, for four years previously he had conducted a memorable embassy to the renowned chieftain in his rocky fortress at Rajgurh,[1] and had there witnessed the principal ceremonies, including the weighing of Sivaji against gold which had accompanied the coronation of this astounding Eastern adventurer. The Company's agents under Oxenden's experienced directions were at this period maintaining good relations with the prince, but the Mahratta hosts were menacingly arrayed on the adjacent mainland, and, what was more disquieting, Siva-

[1] Raigurh (or the Royal Fort originally called Rairi, and known to the early European traders as "the Gibraltar of the East"). Situated in the Mahad taluka of the Kolaba district thirty-two miles south-west of Poona. It stands on the Western Ghauts and was regarded in the last century as one of the greatest strongholds in India. . . . Was invested by a British force in April, 1818, and surrendered after a bombardment from the hill spur called Kal-Kai lasting fourteen days. A treasure of five lakhs of coins was discovered amongst the ruins of the fort.—*Gazetteer of India.*

ji's fleet was lurking about the coast ready to do battle with the Mogul squadrons which were also in the vicinity. There were some anxious days in September, 1678, when the Mahrattas made an attempt to burn the Mohammedan ships anchored in the harbour. The design was frustrated by the determined attitude assumed by the English authority, but the danger of a collision involving the Company in the conflict which was devastating India and shaking the Mogul Empire to its foundations was of too real a character to allow the Bombay Government to entertain any illusions as to the delicate position in which it stood in relation to the two combatants.

As the days slipped by and the Mahratta power revealed more and more its formidable strength as an engine of destructive warfare the anxiety of the English community in Bombay deepened. A crisis was precipitated when, following upon some preliminary operations, the Mahrattas seized Kenery, the larger of the two small islands known as Henery-Kenery, lying at the entrance of the harbour and practically commanding it. Oxenden adopted measures to stop the aggression, claiming the island for the King of England; but Sivaji's commander took little notice of the protest. Then Oxenden sent out a small expedition under Lieut. Thorpe with disastrous results. This "rash and inconsiderate officer," in a fit of pot valiant ardour induced by over-indulgence in

arrack, in defiance of orders given by the Bombay Council landed with several of his men in the island. The Mahrattas quickly took up the quarrel which he appeared to be so eager to pick. A group of them attacked the little party on the beach with such determination that they were not able to offer more than a feeble defence. In the sequel Thorpe was slain with several of his followers and the remainder of the force who had not disembarked were taken prisoners.

So flagrant an insult to the English power as this treacherous attack was could not remain unavenged. As soon as the news reached Bombay the Council set to work to organise an expedition for the purpose of teaching the Mahrattas the lesson that they needed. The only Company's ship available at the moment was the *Revenge*, but she was a handy vessel, and her commander, Minchin, was a stout old seaman who was to be trusted in an emergency. Associated with the *Revenge* were two galleys and six other small craft, the whole being manned by 200 Europeans, two-thirds of the entire garrison, and commanded by Captain Richard Keigwin, the Military Commander of the settlement.

At daybreak on the morning of October 28 the little English flotilla, while at anchor near Kenery awaiting developments, was suddenly attacked by the enemy. There was barely time for the vessels to get under weigh before Sivaji's formidable

fleet of sixty craft, large and small, was assailing them with furious vigour. At an early stage of the conflict one of the English galleys was captured by a boarding party, whereupon the other small craft, which were mainly manned by lascars, took to flight.

The *Revenge* was now left to carry on alone, and she did so in a manner worthy of her historic namesake. With her guns she contrived to keep the Mahrattas off for a time, but the number of her assailants was so great that while attention was being given to one group of hostile vessels another part of the Mahratta fleet was able to close in upon the *Revenge* and board her. Matters were now decidedly critical, but Keigwin and Minchin were both old campaigners and were not slow to see how the situation might be turned to their advantage. When the crowd of assailants on the deck was at its thickest they turned upon it a piece of ordnance loaded to the muzzle with small shot—grape. The effect was deadly and it was decisive. In a brief space the entire Mahratta fleet was in retreat, desperately anxious to win the shelter of the shallow water over by the mainland before the *Revenge* could deal with it. It succeeded in evading the punishment that it anticipated, but it went back short of six of its finest galleys which were sunk in the course of the fighting.

Keigwin was anxious to follow up his victory by an onslaught on Sivaji's fleet at its base, but

the Bombay Council were too fearful of the Mahratta chief's resentment to embark upon any such enterprise. Indeed, they were so much under the spell of his sinister power that they omitted to take the effective course of using the Company's European shipping to oust the Mahrattas from Kenery. The golden opportunity passed. Soon it became a question not whether the Mahrattas would be driven from Kenery by the English, but whether the English would be ousted from Bombay by the Mahrattas. Following upon the defeat of the Mahratta fleet Sivaji had once more massed his legions upon the mainland opposite to Bombay with the apparent object of attempting a *coup de main* upon the island. He kept the Bombay authorities in a painful state of suspense for weeks, and they sent home imploring for instructions as to how they were to act in the future, "otherwise all will be lost," they observed despairingly. They also asked urgently for "200 good English souldiers, and not," they added, "such pitiful wretches as (are) now there that dare not look an enemy in the face."

The news of the Mahratta occupation of Kenery came as a great shock to the directors. They still cherished the belief that they could maintain their position in India without paying the price of dominion. Their invincible confidence in their policy of peaceful penetration had been shaken, but they clung tenaciously to the view that force was no

remedy for the ills which beset their trade. They sent out instructions which showed the uncertain state of their mind. In one paragraph they blamed the Bombay Council for not using the European ships to drive the Mahrattas from the island—"an error not to be redressed." In another they remarked that "peace and not war was the element in which trade flourishes, and 'tis not the interest of a Company of merchants to launch into those great charges which immediately attends it, especially when the operation is considerable and the result hazardous."

Further on in the same communication they elaborated their views. "Wee doe not intend," they wrote, "you should in any hostile manner seize upon or attempt to secure the possession of Hendry-Kendry, because we are (as we ever were) averse to all kind of war in India, not only for that we would not maintain our trade by blood and the lives of men, but it would be a very great imprudence for us at this distance (being merchants and engaged in Commerce) to contend with those great and mighty princes which might soon obstruct our trade and ruine us; but we account it a better way to keep a fair correspondence with all the princes where we traffick."

"You may observe the Dutch," the directors proceeded, "though they doe sometimes engage in war upon islands, yet they dare not medle with those great princes upon the maine land; and,

besides, we doe not think the place worth contesting for unto blood, especially lying at that distance, but if you should be injuriously assaulted at Bombay we would have you defend yourselves as well as you can."

Apparently the Court thought that "fair correspondence" was all that was needed to keep the Company out of mischief. They also seemed to be of the opinion that because the occupied island was some distance from Bombay it was of small account. Events soon showed that it was as easy to chain the hurricane as to stay the aggression of the powerful neighbours of the English n Bombay with fair words. As for the negligibility of Hendry-Kendry, or Henery-Kenery—to give the islands their modern designation—the Indian authorities had reason for many years to rue the supineness of English policy at this period, until, in fact, the islands, with the cession of Kenery, came definitely into British hands in 1840.

Anticipating the wishes of their superiors, the Bombay Council early in 1680 patched up a peace with Sivaji, the effect of which was to leave him in undisputed possession of Kenery. Not long afterwards (on April 5, 1680) the famous Mahratta leader expired at his rocky fortress of Rajgurh from the effects of excessive fatigue in a brilliant campaign which he had just successfully concluded. Sivaji was a man of extraordinary genius for the quasi-guerilla warfare in which the Mahrattas

excelled. The terror of his name had penetrated to every part of India where Mohammedan power was enthroned. At the Mogul Court especially a lively dread was entertained of this dashing lord of many legions whose skilful tactics and whirlwind movements were the despair of the slow moving Imperial forces. Aurungzebe hated him with a bitter hatred, not merely as a foe who gravely menaced his throne, but as a violator of all that he held sacred—as the anti-Mohammed of a blasphemous creed of insult and contumely. Yet even the Emperor, narrow as were his tenets and ungenerous as was his natural disposition, on hearing of Sivaji's death was constrained to pay a tribute to his memory. The Mahratta leader was, he said, "a great captain, and the only one who has had the magnanimity to raise a new kingdom whilst I have been endeavouring to destroy the ancient sovereignties of India."

Aurungzebe in the concluding sentence referred to his bitter and sustained campaign against the Rajpoot princes whose territories he had ravaged for years previously with indecisive results. The quarrel had arisen out of the Emperor's bigoted measures and more especially his imposition of a poll tax upon all non-Mussulmans. The brave Rajpoot spirit had been stung to the quick by this degrading measure. Raja Jeswant Sing, the noble-minded ruler of Jodhpore, whose fidelity to the Mogul power had previously been unwavering,

in words of lofty dignity reasoned with Aurungzebe on the cruelty and folly of his policy.

He recalled that the Emperor's predecessor, Akbar, "whose throne is now in heaven," made no distinction between men, "whether they were followers of Jesus, or of Moses or David, or Mohammed; were they Brahmins, were they of the sect of Dharians which denies the eternity of matter, or of that which ascribes the existence of the world to chance, they all equally enjoyed his countenance and favour." Jehangir and Shah Jehan were (he said) just as liberal minded. But during His Majesty's reign a change had come over things. "Your subjects are trampled under foot and every province of your Empire is impoverished; depopulation spreads and disputes accumulate." How could the dignity of the sovereign be preserved who employed his power in exacting heavy tribute from a people thus miserably reduced? "If," proceeded the old warrior, "Your Majesty places any faith in those books by distinction called divine, you will there be instructed that God is the God of all mankind, not the God of Mohammedans alone. The Pagan and the Mussulman are equal in His presence. Distinctions of colour are of His ordination. It is He who gives existence. In your temples to His name the voice is raised in prayer; in a house of images where a bell is shaken still He is the object of adoration. To vilify the religion or customs of other men is

to set at naught the pleasure of the Almighty. When we deface a picture we naturally incur the resentment of the painter; and justly has the poet said, 'Presume not to arraign or scrutinize the various works of power divine.' In fine, the tribute you demand from the Hindoos is repugnant to justice; it is equally foreign from good policy as it must impoverish the country. Moreover, it is an innovation and an infringement of the laws of Hindoostan."

This splendid lesson in toleration was lost on Aurungzebe, who was too bitter a sectarian to appreciate the truth that religious disabilities are the worst possible basis of government. He went his narrow way, stimulating by his fanaticism the spirit of resistance amongst the Hindoo elements of the population which was tending more and more to undermine the foundations of his Empire.

Sivaji's death gave a keener edge to Aurungzebe's desire to crush this upstart power which was menacing his throne and mocking his faith. Collecting a mighty host, the Emperor, at a period somewhat later than that at which our narrative has reached, took the field and for the remainder of his reign was engaged in fruitless endeavours to suppress his elusive foe. Though his campaigns belong to the general history of India, they had such an immense effect upon the interests of the English in Western India that they cannot altogether be ignored.

An immediate development of the situation created by the demise of the Mahratta leader was the seizure by the Sidhi Sambole, the Mogul Admiral, of Henery, the smaller of the twin islands at the entrance of Bombay Harbour. This new complication almost drove the Bombay Council to despair. "The present state of this country is under such unhappy and uncertaine distempers that wee know not well what to write your honours," they gloomily remarked in their letter home announcing the Mogul irruption into the harbour.

What had depressed them more especially was the action of the Mogul Admiral, who, having gained a victory over the Mahrattas, was so "puffed up" that he "now presumes to give laws in all that Bay (solely your Honours' royalty), requiring all vessels from your island to take his passes or otherwise will seize them. Besides, his men coming in great numbers ashore are soe insolent and abusive that if it be not suddenly remedied some dangerous consequences will ensue." It was useless to complain to the Governor of Surat, "as he is so exasperated at our making peace with Sivaji that he not only encourages but abets the Syddy in these abuses." The Council warned the directors that if some effectual step was not taken to remedy the situation the Company would lose the island. They reiterated the warning a little later, stating as their settled opinion that if strong

measures were not adopted "that most unhappy, incomparable place will prove nothing but a constant trouble and damage to you."

Annesley all this time was learning the rudiments of his duty as a young official. He seems to have got to work after a fashion on the mint machinery, but neither he nor his fellow-officials could manage it satisfactorily, and as, for the reasons explained, there was little call for coin, the attempt was soon laid aside. Annesley was given other duties of more pressing moment in the Accounts Department. But business was so disorganised in Bombay that before many months had elapsed he was transferred to the Surat Factory. In the interval he doubtless took a hand in reorganising the Militia by utilising the best of the very unpromising elements that were available. He had had no military experience whatever, but every European on the island was a potential combatant in the crisis that then existed, and he had to take his share of duty with the rest of the officials.

The Bombay Militia had been established in the early years of the settlement by the thrifty directors in the belief that their military expenditure would be eased by the embodiment of promising civilians whose services could be commanded without charge. Much thought and care were bestowed upon the organisation of the force. First there was drawn up a series of "Laws and

Ordinances of Warr" for the maintenance of discipline. These regulations give a vivid impression of the military life of Bombay in these early days. The rules are arranged under two headings—"Our duties to God" and "Our duties to his Majesty."

The character of the former is well indicated in the opening clause:—"Let noe man presume to blaspheme the Holy Trinity, God the Father, God the Sonne, and God the Holy Ghost, nor the knowne articles of the Christian faith, upon paine of having his tongue boared with a redd hot iron." As to the duties to the sovereign, it was enacted that "All and every officer that shall any treasonable or reproachfull speeches use against his Majesty's sacred person or authority shall die without mercy." On the strictly military side the directors were equally careful to define the responsibilities of their servants.

The model they had in view was the trained bands of the homeland. The enrolled men were to be exercised in arms "one day every two months, or as often as you shall think may be convenient, but," proceeded the cautious writer, "you need not always waste powder at such exercise, but teach them to handle their arms, their facings, wheeling marching and countermarching, the first ranks to present, draw their triggers together at the beat of the drum, and fall into the rear for the second rank to advance, as is often used with

learners in our artillery ground." While economy in the use of powder was enjoined, it was admitted that "sometimes the men must be used to firing, lest in time of action they should start at the noise or the recoil of their arms." A Falstaffian army of varied racial elements grew up under the influence of these quaint rules. It was such poor food for powder that not many years elapsed before the Company discovered that, without some stiffening, either of Europeans or of "Rashpoots" (Rajpoots), it was not worth the money expended upon it.

From the military standpoint the permanent garrison of Bombay was only a degree superior to the Militia. The "pittiful wretches," of whose deficiencies the Bombay Council wrote with such poignant feeling, were, as has been stated, deficient in all the qualities of soldiers. "They cannot be kept from debauchery," wrote an official to the directors about this time, "though never so sick to the destruction of their bodies and souls." "To persons labouring under the diseases of the country," he proceeded, "strong drink and flesh is mortall; which to make an English soldier leave off is almost as difficult as to make him divest his nature, nay, though present death be laid before him, as the reward of the ill gratifying his palate."

Discipline was maintained by brutal methods in harmony with the callous spirit of the times. A short time after Annesley arrived in India a

soldier named Tatham was arrainged by court martial for assisting at the escape of a condemned woman over whom he had been placed sentinel. The man's feelings were apparently worked upon by the woman's friends, and in any event the affair was clearly only a youthful escapade. Yet the unfortunate fellow was condemned to death. On a review of the case the Surat Council "reduced the sentence to one of running the gauntlet for three times through the two garrison companies, he afterwards to be kept in prison pending his despatch to England." Tatham appealed against the revised sentence, and in consideration of his youth (he "not being above 18 years of age") it was ordered that he should run the gauntlet only once. As in "Running the gauntlet" the culprit had to pass practically naked through lines of soldiers armed with knotted ropes which they were compelled under the vigilant eyes of their officers to use upon his flying form with all the vigour that they could exercise, the unfortunate boy, for he was no more, must have suffered terribly. The conditions being what they were, it is no matter for surprise that the Company's military service was maintained with the utmost difficulty owing to the continuous depletion of the ranks by death and desertion.

CHAPTER III

Keigwin's Rebellion in Bombay

Bombay officials—Henry Gary, the Chief Justice—John Francis, the Minister—Sir John Child, the Governor—Child's unpopularity—His excessive economy causes military disaffection—Captain Richard Keigwin heads a revolt—He seizes the fort and proclaims an independent Government—The "little false Scot," Thorborne, the moving spirit in the rising—Keigwin maintains his position for nine months, holding Bombay "for the King"—Royal expedition despatched under the command of Sir Thomas Grantham to recover the island—Keigwin surrenders to Grantham—The chief conspirators escape punishment—Keigwin's action reviewed—Gary's mission to Sambhaji, Sivaji's son—Terms of the treaty concluded by Gary—Capture of Sambhaji by Mogul troops—His execution.

THE Bombay community amongst whom Annesley's lot was cast during the earliest years of his exile faithfully reflected the crude conditions under which the East India Company's first essays in government were conducted. The superior social element made up of factors, writers, and a handful of military men, did not probably number more than twenty, of whom less than a

half-dozen were ladies. The exiles lived together in the narrow confines of the fort, whose ramparts provided the favourite promenade after the labours of the day. A pleasant garden attached to the Governor's quarters had its portals open for the privileged; but the cultivation of the quieter joys of life was not amongst the tastes of the Englishmen who were Annesley's associates. A tavern, or what passed for such, was one of the institutions of the place, and here they were usually to be found drinking, it is to be feared, a good deal more than was good for them. We do not know whether Annesley fell a victim to the common habit. But we may with fair certainty say that he did not. No suggestion of excess is to be traced in any of the references to him, and the practical immunity he enjoyed from the diseases of the country which were so fatal to his fellows is of itself a conclusive proof of his general abstemiousness.

High office in Bombay at this juncture was associated with some singular characters. Just previous to Annesley's introduction to Indian life the local Council had come to the conclusion that a Chief Justice was desirable as a figurehead for their judicial administration. They selected for the office a certain Henry Gary, an old Irish soldier, who had seen a good many years' service with the Company in various parts of the East and acted as Deputy-Governor of Bombay in the earliest

years. Endowing him with the modest salary of £90 a year and investing him with a gown, the cost of which the Company defrayed, the Council started him on his duty of meting out justice to the population of the island. Gary must have appeared a quaint figure on the bench. According to his contemporaries he indulged deep in potations, and we may picture him with wig awry and face inflamed with the overnight's debauch laying down the law in the rude language of the military camp to evil-doers brought before him.

Some amazing tales were told in after years of his vagaries. But what brought about his downfall was not his incompetence, but a report that he was a Papist. The directors' Puritanical prejudices took fire at this indictment of the Chief Justice's soundness in religion, as they regarded it, and sent out orders for his supersession. In vain Gary pleaded that he was a member of the Established Church and attended regularly the ministrations of the chaplain. The Company were bent on a change, and they appointed a trained lawyer named St. John to act as the head of their judiciary. Gary, fallen from high office, took his revenge by joining the ranks of a disaffected faction which was soon to make history to some purpose in Bombay.

A figure of a totally different type in the English life of the settlement at this time was John Francis, the Chaplain or Minister as he was officially de-

scribed. Francis was a man of unaffected piety and devoted to his charge. He had served under Aungier and had nobly reinforced that eminent man's efforts to cleanse the life of Bombay from the abominations which defaced it in its earliest years. One of Aungier's cherished ambitions was the erection of a church worthy of the settlement. He did not live to see his hopes realised, but in his will he left Rs. 5,000 for the completion of the structure which had been commenced under his directions. Francis continued the work as a sacred duty. By dint of perseverance he collected a good sum in additional subscriptions to the church fund, and if Aungier's legacy had been available he might have crowned his labours in the East by opening the first English church erected in Western India. But the money was never forthcoming for some unexplained reason. It was afterwards stated that the legacy was appropriated by Sir John Child, who filled the chief office for several years.

This, however, is probably a calumny of Child's numerous enemies. The truth would seem to be that the executors in England did not consider it necessary to carry out this provision of the will, and that the directors would not go to the expense of compelling them to execute it. Francis, deprived of the substantial assistance of Aungier's legacy and despairing of completing his self-imposed task in the face of the growing anarchy

caused in the settlement by internal feuds and external dangers, retired to England a broken and disappointed man. It was left to a successor to the chaplaincy nearly half a century later to carry through the long-deferred work which gave to Bombay the large and somewhat ugly building dedicated to St. Thomas, which is the cathedral church of the diocese.

Sir John Child, to whom passing allusion has been made, in 1680 succeeded Oxenden as Deputy-Governor of Bombay, and later became head of the Company's establishments in Western India. He was a zealous official who had been marked out for promotion by his shrewd management of the Company's affairs in various responsible positions. But he was ill fitted either by nature or training to deal with a crisis such as that which had been precipitated by the soaring ambitions of Sivaji. As a contemporary said of him: "He was a General, but no soldier; and better skilled at his pen than his sword; and more expert in casting an account than in martialling (*sic*) and conducting an army."

The misfortune of it was that he did not know his limitations. He was not content with flouting the opinions of the military: he treated Keigwin and his brother officers with studied harshness, ruthlessly cutting down their exiguous allowances and depriving some of them of offices which they had long held. In adopting these measures

he no doubt was carrying out the Company's policy of economy expressed in the phrase "Trade, not Grandure," but he was on the spot and the directors were many thousands of miles away, and he ought to have realised how impossible it was in the then circumstances of Bombay to reduce an establishment already perilously small, as events had shown, for maintaining the English position against the hungry Mahratta hordes which at the time were at the very gates of the settlement.

Child, however, was docile to the point of servility and accepted with alacrity the *rôle* of financial reformer. His free exercise of the pruning knife awakened very quickly a feeling of sullen resentment amongst the victims, who were mostly of the military class. They saw, or affected to see, in the economies a deliberate betrayal of their country. They had long distrusted the "unctuous rectitude" which put a heavy premium on their vices and even interfered with their innocent pleasures, and they were now convinced that the untimely retrenchments were part of a dark scheme of the canting Puritans and Exclusionists of Leadenhall Street to sacrifice the island of Bombay which had been handed to them in trust by their Royal master. Moved by these feelings, they conspired to throw off the hated yoke of Child and his servile Council. How completely they succeeded in carrying out their designs is told in

one of the most astounding chapters of the early history of the English in India.

The head of the rebel movement was Captain Richard Keigwin, the hero of the gallant repulse of Sivaji's fleet. Keigwin was an old soldier of the Parliamentary wars, in which he served with distinction on the Royalist side under Prince Rupert. When the civil contest was over he emigrated to St. Helena as a planter, but his restless nature soon drove him further afield, and about the time of Aungier's death he landed in Bombay. Congenial employment was soon found for him there with the military force, the command of which was ultimately given him. Like most adventurers of his class, he had a fine contempt for civilian authority. The feeling was returned with interest by the governing clique, who with the power of the purse in their hands were able to retaliate with effect. Keigwin more and more fell under the official ban as he showed his independence of constituted authority by openly consorting with those who were in the Company's black books.

It was the period when interloping—as the poaching on the Company's preserves by independent traders was known—was becoming a serious problem for the directors. The "pirate" Pitt of the Eastern Coast had his counterparts in Western India in Thomas Petit and George Bowcher, two dismissed officials of the Company.

With these all too notorious individuals Keigwin had friendly relations, and to their illicit councils was called Gary and other men of a similar stamp who had grievances against the Company. Thus it happened that a very powerful confederacy was formed with a capacity for mischief which was abundantly demonstrated when the storm actually burst.

Keigwin's masterly leadership was shown in the methodical manner in which he laid his plans for the meditated *coup*. Availing himself of an opportunity afforded by the absence of Child and several of the members of the Council at Surat on December 27, 1683, he led an armed body into the fort, and having overpowered the guard and made prisoners of the Deputy-Governor and other officials, caused a new Government to be created with himself as its head. Simultaneously a party of soldiers detailed for the purpose seized the Company's ship *Return*, then at anchor in the harbour, and took possession of specie to the amount of Rs.20,000 which was on board of her.

On the following day, with much military pomp, the new Government was publicly proclaimed in the square in the fort. The ceremony concluded with the firing of three volleys "in token of joy" and with an answering salute from the great guns of the fort. Thereafter the loyal officials were packed off to Surat on a ship which had been prepared for the purpose. "Thus," wrote John

Church, the Minister, who was a spectator of the proceedings, "were the Honourable Company in two or three days deprived of all their concerns in Bombay by the interest of two or three discontented and factious persons, the most active of which was that little false Scot, Thorborne." The "little false Scot" of the Minister's description was Ensign Thorborn, a sometime tailor who had been elevated to military rank by Child because he appeared to have a soul above the bench. His "ingratitude" was afterwards a subject of eloquent commentary in the official despatches. Rightly or wrongly he was regarded as the moving spirit in the rebellion, and it is quite possible that he was actually the chief agent in the preliminary work of suborning the garrison.

As the revolution was bloodless in its inception, so it continued to the end. For nine months Keigwin was in undisputed possession of the Government. In vain Child alternately threatened and wheedled. Keigwin absolutely declined to recognise his authority. He adhered to the position that he had taken up from the first, that Child's "irregular Government continued in malice, avarice, oppression, extortion and other intolerable insolencies" without regard to His Majesty's honour or his subjects' welfare, had compelled the conspirators "to flee from their malicious cruelty and uncontrollable insolence to our most gracious Sovereign's honour, mercy and clemency," and

that in acting as they had done they had saved the island, menaced as it was by a potent enemy who with a victorious army had been ravaging the adjacent Portuguese territory during the previous eight months.

To all applications for the surrender of the island Keigwin advanced the view that he held it for the King, and declared that he would not hand over its Government excepting to one who was delegated by the Crown to receive it. In keeping with this theory Keigwin addressed petitions to the King and to the Duke of York, setting forth the circumstances under which the Government had been subverted and denouncing the pusillanimous conduct of "the Merchant Governors of the Company that never see an enemy nor know anything of war, nor will take advice of them that do."

When these documents reached their destination with the accounts of the rebellion which Child promptly forwarded, the Court of Directors immediately took steps to vindicate their outraged sovereignty. They had no difficulty in securing the issue of a Royal proclamation ordering the rebels to surrender the island within twenty-four hours on pain of being dealt with "as rebels and traitors to the utmost demerit of their guilt." An expedition, consisting of six of the Company's vessels and a Royal man-of-war, H.M.S. *Phœnix*, was fitted out and promptly despatched under

the command of Sir Thomas Grantham to enforce the terms of the Royal decree.

When Grantham reached Bombay early in November he found Keigwin and his principal officers ready to surrender conditionally on their receiving a free pardon. But the general body of soldiers at the critical moment declared against a settlement, asserting that if Keigwin would not consent to remain their Governor they would appoint some one else in his place. One of their number went so far as to aim his pistol at Grantham and would have taken his life had not an officer standing near caught the man's arm and disarmed him. Grantham, seeing how matters stood, discreetly retired to his ship, where he remained until Keigwin had had time to convince his men of the folly of further resistance.

At length on the 19th November the rebels made their full submission. Grantham took care that the resumption of the Company's Government should be brought home properly to the inhabitants. Attended by a substantial guard and with trumpeters sounding a triumphal flourish he walked through the Fort to the Court House, where he addressed a gathering which included many of the leading inhabitants, putting them in possession of the principal points of the Royal Proclamation. The day's proceedings were closed characteristically with a dinner provided at the Marshal's house at Grantham's expense. At

this, Grantham told his superiors in a letter home he "began with His Majesty's health with 21 guns from the Fort, the Queen's with 19, the Duke of York's with 17, Prince George's with 15 and the Honourable Company's with 15, they being all satisfied and in peace, which (he piously adds) God grant may continue." So the whole business ended in smoke—an appropriate end to an amazing episode.

Keigwin and three of his fellow-conspirators, Thorborn, Alderton and Fletcher, were exempted by the terms of the Royal Proclamation from pardon. But the arrangement they entered into with Grantham protected them from subsequent punishment. Their escape was gall and wormwood to Child. Writing home at the beginning of January, 1685, he relates how "Keigwin, that notorious naughty rascall is on board of the *Charles the Second* (Grantham's ship) as impudent as hell, glorying in his rogery." "We cannot see but he will get out of our hands," he proceeded, "but, indeed, its ten thousand pittys he should escape the halter being the very first rascall without whom that revolt on Bombay would not have been." Escape the halter, however, he did, for he lived to do gallant service for his country and to die in the assault on Basterre in the island of St. Christopher.

Judged by strict rules of conduct, Keigwin's action was reprehensible. He ate the Company's

salt and then used the position he owed to his employers to undermine their authority. Allowance, however, must be made for the times in which he lived and the peculiar conditions of India at the period of the rebellion. Revolt against constituted authority when that authority misused its powers was the common creed of many. Viewing as he honestly did the neglect of the fortifications of Bombay in the presence of the threat of a Mahratta irruption as an act of criminal folly, it was for him an easy step to his position that the ties of his allegiance to the Company had been severed.

And who will deny that his line of thought and action was so very wrong after all? Bombay was really a Royal demesne held in trust by the Company. As a loyal subject of the King, Keigwin was quite within his rights in protecting it from alienation to a foreign power even at the cost of a rupture with the civilian representatives of the trust authority. However that may be, he deserves to be held in good remembrance by his countrymen of to-day, for it is probable that but for the stimulative influence of the rebellion on the sluggish imaginations of the authorities at home Bombay would ultimately have been lost, with the consequence that the establishment of British power in Western India might have been delayed for a century.

On the re-establishment of the Company's

authority at Bombay life for a time dropped into its old grooves. It was a fortunate circumstance for the Council that the Mahratta power at this period became less formidable. Sivaji's son and successor, Sambhaji, lacked most of his sire's military qualities. Moreover, his good offices, or at least his benevolent neutrality, had been secured by an astute move made by Keigwin in his self-constituted office as the chief English representative. Realising the importance of securing Bombay against Mahratta attack, Keigwin had despatched Gary to Sambhaji's camp to secure the ratification of the treaty—previously referred to—which had been provisionally arranged with Sivaji. Gary, whose military qualities and genial personality commended him to the Mahrattas, proved a successful envoy. He took back with him to Bombay a treaty duly signed by Sambhaji which conferred valuable privileges. Under its terms the English, besides securing the right to establish new factories at Cuddalore and Thevenapatam, were granted exemption from duties in the Carnatic, and obtained, in addition, compensation to the extent of 12,000 pagodas for losses sustained at places which the Mahrattas had plundered.

By this shrewd diplomatic stroke Sambhaji

[1] Pagoda. A gold coin minted at Madras of the value of about 8s. and so called from the fact of its having the representation of a temple on its face.

had been converted from a potential enemy to a firm friend, but the value of his friendship was heavily discounted by the instability of his character.

A debauchee of a pronounced type, he pursued his vices far more ardently than he devoted himself to the aggrandizement of his power. His moral weaknesses ultimately led to his undoing. Towards the close of 1688, when prosecuting one of his innumerable intrigues, he was ambuscaded by a party of Mogul troops, and taken prisoner. In his last days he redeemed by his sturdy independence the character of his race and the honour of his house. Brought before Aurungzebe to answer for the crime of warring against the Mogul power, he bore himself with undaunted mien. The Imperial despot, probably to try his mettle, offered him his life and liberty if he would turn Mohammedan. Sambhaji's reply was a flood of invective against the Prophet and a laudation of his own gods.

Enraged at the insult to his religion, the Emperor ordered the captive to be attired in the fantastic garb of an Indian devotee and taken through the camp to be made the sport of the soldiery. When the Prince had thus been made to drink to the dregs the cup of humiliation, he was brought once more to the Imperial headquarters, where his tongue was cut out as a penalty for his blasphemy of Mohammed. Once more he was offered his life

if he would be converted. Undaunted still, he wrote: "Not if you would give me your daughter in marriage." Upon this his execution was ordered, and Orme, the historian, says, the sentence was performed "by cutting out his heart, after which his limbs and body were separated and all together were thrown to the dogs." Aurungzebe thus rid himself of a dangerous foe, but the Mahratta power survived to defeat the great purpose of his life and to bring about the utter disintegration of the authority of his dynasty.

CHAPTER IV

The East India Company makes War on the Mogul

A critical period for the Company—Sir Josiah Child, the President of the Board of Directors, declares for a strong policy in India—Bombay "the Key of India"—Sir John Child ordered to abandon Surat for Bombay—He is appointed to the supreme control of the Company's affairs in India—Mogul jealousy of Bombay—Declaration of War against the Mogul—Sir John Child proceeds to Surat to secure redress of grievances.

IN all the long history of the East India Company there were for it no more critical years than those of the last two decades of the seventeenth century. It maintained in that period a continuous struggle for existence, fighting against a host of enemies not the least formidable of whom were those of its own household. There were occasions when it seemed that its misfortunes must overwhelm it, but by its innate power it maintained its position and eventually continued its career with renewed vigour. If the Company's troubles, as at Bombay, were to a considerable extent brought by the directors upon their own heads by their

uninspired and sordid policy, it must be conceded to them that they showed more than the common national capacity for "muddling through."

They owed this, there can be little doubt, to their Chairman, Sir Josiah Child,[1] a man of exceptional force of character who was a dominating personality at India House during the greater part of this period of crisis. Child's fiery disposition acted as a driving force alike to timid colleagues and sluggish servants. Sometimes his energy was misdirected; frequently his judgments were unsound and his opinions coloured by a strong prejudice. But despite all his limitations he was an invaluable head of the organisation, and it was probably largely to his influence that it was preserved from extinction in these desperate years.

For a period in the earlier years of his direction Sir Josiah Child, in common with his colleagues at India House, inclined to the belief that trade with India might be conducted on strictly economical and exclusively commercial lines. All their plans were framed to this end, and when, as inevitably happened, their servants got into difficulties with the native authorities they could not understand how it was they were not able to extricate themselves by diplomacy. Time at this crisis of Indian history, however, was an exceptionally good educator, and many years had not elapsed ere the directors had been brought to a

[1] Sir Josiah Child was not related to Sir John Child.

different frame of mind by the course of events in which attacks on the Company's servants by corrupt officials recurred with monotonous persistency. Their conversion was due in the main to the outrages perpetrated on the Company's servants in Bengal—occurrences which led to the historic series of incidents which terminated in the founding of Calcutta. But the Bombay rising brought things into a clearer perspective and induced the directors to see that only with established positions of their own could they hope to conduct a profitable trade in India.

Child, it is fairly safe to conclude, was the leading spirit in effecting the change of policy. His voice rings unmistakably through the declarations in the despatches in which the Company's officers in India are instructed as to the attitude they are to assume in the new circumstances. As he had before been dogmatically provincial in his views, so he now becomes robustly Imperialist. The old heresy which confined the Company strictly to the humble mercantile *rôle* is thrust aside and in its place we have quite an extraordinary sketch of belligerent activity as the fitting and even indispensable manifestation of a body situated as the East India Company was with a valuable estate to protect from internal aggression and external rivalry.

Sir Josiah Child made Bombay the theme of nearly all his more spirited discourses. The cold

fit of neglect which Aungier had suffered under had passed and given place to an almost ebullient belief in the island's future. "We look upon that place," Child said, "as the Key of India, not doubting (with God's blessing), if we can preserve that and Madras, to vindicate the honour of this nation against any enemy we have or can have in India, European or Native." A little later with some confusion of metaphor he spoke of the island as "a jewel that we will always endeavour to make as strong and secure as money and art can provide."

These expressions of opinion were associated with orders directing Sir John Child to quit Surat and make Bombay the headquarters of his Government in order that he might be free from the intolerable restraints and indignities to which the Company's servants were subjected at the former place; "for," said the despatch, "We are positively resolved never to be enslaved by the Moor's Government hereafter." The orders were repeated with increasing insistency with every communication that went out until we reach the point when the Bombay Council were told that the directors did "strictly, permanently and peremptorily resolve" that all their English servants should constantly reside in Bombay as they were determined to keep the place always as the seat of their power and the centre of their trade in India.

Associated with these orders were directions for

the maintenance of a firm front towards outside powers. "If any nation fall upon you," the directors under Child's inspiration wrote, "we would have you take the first and best opportunity you can to right us and yourselves without expecting further orders from England, for (God be praised) we are now in such a posture in India that we need not to sneak or put up (with) palpable injuries from any nation whatsoever in India, and with God's assistance we hope alwaies to keep ourselves in such a formidable posture of defence." At the same time the Company would have their servants do no manner of violence to any one in amity with them. "We would not wrong a worm. Just and Stout is our policy," continued the despatch in a burst of self-adulation. No doubt "the Moor's Court at Surat" would try to induce them to return, but, the writer added, "they would not (even if the customs were free) be drawn into that fool's paradise again." Child, for the despatch was certainly of his composition, gave directions for the establishment of a Post Office and an Assurance Office and was most emphatic in the re-iteration of earlier orders for the setting up of an efficient mint.

An amusing warning against being too friendly to strangers—earlier types of the *genus* globe-trotter—rounded off an interesting essay on the arts of Government. "You must be cautious," remarked the sturdy old President, "how you trust too far

those kind of wandering men who have, most of them, worms in their heads and some of them malice in their hearts against us, though as the proverb is Curst cows have usually short horns and we have no reason to make them longer."
Mr. Padgett, M.P., is clearly not a product of our own age.

In October, 1686, Sir John Child was appointed "General and Director in Chief" of all the Company's factories in India to carry out the new policy. The directors continued to place their faith in him, notwithstanding the revolt in Bombay, which was largely due to his weak and incompetent administration. They overlooked his deficiencies—they were probably not conscious of them because they were to a considerable extent a faithful reflection of their own mercantile narrowness of outlook. His gross neglect in the matter of the Bombay fortifications was actually condoned as a proof of his zeal for the Company's interests—the "poor gentleman" being "loath to put us to expense because he knew we laboured then under many difficulties." This was an honest recognition of the directors' share of responsibility for the patent blunder that had been committed, and as such it does them credit. But their blindness to Child's incapacity as a chief administrator in a situation which called for the exercise of resolution combined with tactful diplomacy was an error for which they had to pay dearly.

The scene now shifts from Bombay to Surat. The position there for some time previously had been a difficult one owing to the growing jealousy of the Mogul authority of the Company's settlement at Bombay. The Mogul officials intensely disliked the idea that the English should have on the Coast a port of their own. They feared that they might lose the pigeon that they had so long been accustomed to pluck as it suited them; they were still more apprehensive lest a centre of influence should be created which would become inimical to their power, already severely shaken by Mahratta inroads. Their natural suspicions were worked upon by the Surat traders, who judged correctly that any severance of the ties which bound the English to their old sphere of action would militate against their vested interests, since the trade which previously had been done through them would flow through other channels. In Aungier's time it seemed likely that many of the more important native firms would migrate from Surat to Bombay. The directors, in fact, quite expected that they would do so—"as crows resort to carrion." But the decay of the settlement after the eminent Governor's death caused a revulsion of feeling amongst the class and they preferred to bear the ills of Surat rather than to face those they knew not of at Bombay.

While this was the situation so far as it was affected by purely local interests, there had arisen

a crisis in the general relations of the English with the Mogul which involved in its influence every English community in India. In furtherance of their new policy the directors in 1686 obtained from the Crown authority to make open war on the Mogul. An expedition was sent out to Bengal to retaliate for injuries done there to the Company's agents, and, as we have seen, orders were issued to Bombay to concentrate the Company's power there. Such action had its inevitable consequences in aggravating the already strained relations between the native Government at Surat and the English. After a series of incidents, in which the Mogul officials behaved with characteristic high-handedness, matters came to a head in October, 1688, when Sir John Child drew up a list of grievances and proceeded to Surat with a substantial marine force to secure their removal. Before the story of his intervention and its sequel is narrated, it will be desirable for the better comprehension of the events that occurred to give some account of Surat and of its relationship to the struggle then proceeding in India between the English and the over-ruling Mohammedan authority.

CHAPTER V

Surat and the English Factory

Description of Surat—Commercial importance of the City—The English Factory—The President an autocrat—Great official state maintained at the Factory—Swally Marine—The Mogul Governor—The Vaccaneuvis and the Harcoora—The Harcoora an official reporter—Quaint specimen of a Harcoora's letters—The Harcoora's blackmailing propensities—The population of Surat—The Memon Borahs—Abdul Guffore or Jafar, the head of the community—The Banians—Their curious tenets—The Parrakh family the head of the Banian community—Described as "Errant Knaves"—Their knavery curiously interwoven with the life history of Annesley—Progress of Annesley in official life—A dubious transaction—Petit and Bowcher the "Naughty interlopers"—English President invokes the Governor's aid to suppress them—Present to the Governor—Annesley appointed Second Member of Council—His domestic life—English trade in India in the seventeenth century.

MUCH of the early history of the English in India is concerned with Surat. As the casual tourist sees the place to-day, a quiet Mofussil town shimmering in the glare of a tropical sun, he has presented to him few marks of that intimate association with the rise of British power

in the East which is part of its past. Down by the waterside overlooking the muddy estuary of the Tapti is a house of a ripe age which once formed part of the English factory. Away out of the town is an old graveyard in which under pretentious tombs lie the half-forgotten worthies who made history of a sort in the remote seventeenth-century days in which most of them lived. But these are about the only tangible evidences he will discover of the Company period.

The tide of commerce has long since swept into other channels, and the descendants of the former merchants who were humble suppliants for Mogul goodwill are now on an ampler and grander stage carrying forward their country's destinies. Yet Surat is a name which must ever be indissolubly linked in memory with the establishment of the British Indian Empire. It was here that the pioneer representatives of English trade in the East established their first foothold on Indian soil; it was from hence that Sir Thomas Roe, James I's shrewd Ambassador, started on his famous mission to Jehangir's Court at Agra; and it was to Surat that he returned two years later a disappointed and disillusioned man. Most important of all, viewed from the vantage ground of history, it was at Surat that the early trade was created which was the real groundwork of the magnificent edifice of British power existing to-day in India.

Surat was already famous as a commercial centre when the East India Company's first representatives reached it in 1608. Through its gates passed a great trade conducted with every part of the East. Thousands of pilgrims annually sailed from the port to the holy places in Arabia, bringing wealth to its citizens and providing a constant income for the support of the native shipping. As an important sphere of Mogul Government the city, too, drew to it elements of wealth. The route between the port and Agra, the then capital, was filled with a constant stream of traffic indicative of the importance of the line of communication which had its outlet on the western coast. The streets of the city itself hummed with the life of a busy commercial centre.

As the years went by and the European nations brought their substantial contributions to the port's commerce, Surat increased in importance. Many splendid mansions sprung up in which Eastern luxury found its expression in marble seraglios, beautiful scented gardens and plashing fountains, and a general exuberance of costly adornment. The various factories, English, Dutch and French, which had grown from humble beginnings into important institutions, now added to the outward signs of opulence and grandeur. Each studiously cultivated the art of display and vied with the other in the magnificence of equipment in public appearances. So the city progressed until at the

period of our narrative it had a population of 200,000 inhabitants of many races and creeds and brought to the Imperial funds a handsome annual revenue.

The English factory was as little like the industrial building that we know by the same name to-day as it is possible to conceive. It was not a single structure but a congeries of buildings irregularly placed with go-downs or warehouses in one part and the apartments of the Company's factors and writers in another. In addition to what may be described as the personal quarters, were several handsome and roomy chambers, including an oratory. The entire factory was enclosed by a wall and admission to it from outside was through massive gates at which a guard was constantly posted. A strict routine was enforced alike in business and in the conduct of the ordinary private relations of life. In the morning between ten and twelve the principal work of the day was done. At midday a substantial dinner was served in the Common Hall where all sat in strict order of seniority. The viands were prepared by skilled cooks, English and Portuguese, and occasionally French. They were washed down by libations of Shiraz wine, which the Company provided at some cost because it believed that a little wine was good to ward off the ills of a tropical climate. Unhappily, to the Persian vintage was often added the potent wine of the country in the shape of arrack,

or, as it was termed, 'rack—a spirit usually distilled from the palm. This deadly decoction played havoc with the health of the exiles and largely accounted for the terrible mortality which is a melancholy feature of the records of these seventeenth-century days.

The President, or Chief, as the leading factor was sometimes described, exercised autocratic sway over the little kingdom of which the factory was composed. He was invested with all the attributes of Eastern power, numerous personal servants, a body-guard, and a palanquin with liveried bearers, and his public appearances were made in great state with trumpeters and bannermen going before him; while a long train of officials and servants brought up the rear. Even when the factors paid a visit, as they frequently did, to their beautiful pleasure garden outside the town, custom did not allow the President to put off his marks of official dignity. On those occasions Suratees of the time were familiar with a long procession of English officials and their ladies reclining in palanquins, being borne along in stately fashion to their *buena festa* in the cool seclusion of their suburban retreat. When a rage for economy seized the Company the directors, as we have seen, preached against the empty grandeur that their servants were prone to. But the mood passed and we find them strictly enjoining Sir John Child to maintain at Bombay a body-guard

of thirty, subsequently increased to fifty, Grenadiers "for the dignity of his place and the honour His Majesty hath conferred upon him in allowing him the title and authority of our General, as alsoe for the safety of his own person."

The tender solicitude for their General's dignity shown by the Company had probably been quickened by the news reaching them by every ship from India of the pomp assumed by the "naughty" interlopers who made it a practice to parade ashore with bands playing, colours flying and a display of sartorial magnificence highly appealing to impressionable natives accustomed to measure an individual's status by the number of his attendants and the character of their equipment.

The Council usually consisted of four members and included, besides the Agent, who was President, the accountant, the storekeeper and the purser marine. Next in importance after the Council was the Secretary, who was present at the official meetings and prepared a diary of all consultations, a copy of which was sent home at regular intervals accompanied by a general letter reviewing the proceedings. The chaplain or minister ranked third in the order of precedence, the surgeon sixth, and the steward eighth. Then followed in strict rotation the merchants, factors, writers and apprentices. Official emoluments were on a remarkably low scale. They ranged from £300 per annum for the President down to £10 per

annum for the newly joined writer. Besides the payment of regular salaries allowances were given for the performance of special duties, and every official of the Company enjoyed free quarters and board in the factory as well as the services of personal attendants. It was, however, the profits of private trading rather than the official income which were the main attraction of a career in the Company's service at this period. So lucrative were the operations in which the officials engaged with a greater or less degree of regularity that fortunes were made by men in the highest positions, while from those of lesser authority there was directed homewards a continuous stream of handsome remittances attesting the substantial character of the advantages which they permitted themselves. Even in the troubled times at the end of the seventeenth century the openings were so good that almost without an exception the officials in the most conspicuous positions on the termination of their careers by retirement or death are shown to have been possessed of large estates.

In intimate association with the English factory, in fact a branch of it, was an establishment maintained at Swally, the point a few miles down the river overlooking the deep pool or "Hole" at which the Company's shipping swung at anchorage. This Swally Marine, as it was termed, was the headquarters of the Captains of the Company's

ships when ashore, and formed a sort of neutral ground convenient for conferences with the native authorities when relations were strained as they often were at the period of which we are writing. It was here that Sir John Child held his parley with the local Government in 1688 in circumstances to be related later.

During the seventeenth century Surat was under the despotic control of a succession of Governors appointed by the Mogul Emperors. They were usually Court favourites who had temporarily won the capricious favour of the Mogul and been given the administration of the western port as a reward for the services they had rendered or were supposed to have rendered to the throne. Their rule for the most part was a tyrannous oppression veiled under legal forms and restrained only by a fear of retaliation on the part of the oppressed, when the victim was European, and of Court intrigue when Indians were the sufferers and were wealthy enough to bribe over the great man's head.

Next in rank to the Governor was the Vaccaneuvis,[1] a functionary whose position was analogous to that of a registrar or remembrancer, and whose

[1] *Vacca, Vakea Nevis.*—"An event, news": a "a news-writer." These among the Moghuls were a sort of registrars or remembrancers. Later they became spies who were sent into the provinces to supply information to the Central Government.—HOBSON-JOBSON.

chief business was to keep the Imperial Court informed as to the transactions of the local Government and the general course of events. Associated with him, and ranking third in the official class, was the Harcoora,[1] a personage who played a most important part in the life of the India of the Moguls. In some Indian glossaries, like his colleague, the Vaccaneuvis, he is described as a spy, but a designation which more aptly defines his real position is official reporter. His duty was to indite for the Emperor's information periodical reports giving an account of all occurrences of interest in his sphere of duty. They were not stiff, dry-as-dust communications confined to events which related to the public service, but News Letters in the fullest sense of the term. The Harcoora wrote not merely to inform his Imperial master but to interest him, and with a gift for picturesqueness which appears to have been acquired with his office he put on record much entertaining matter

[1] Ovington (*A Voyage to Surat*) gives the following interesting description of these officials :—

"The Vacanavish is the Mogul's publick Intelligencer and is employed in giving a weekly account from Suratt to the Court of India of all occurrences here of truth and moment.

"Next to him and somewhat like him is another officer called the Harcarrah, who harkens to all kind of news whether true or false, listens to everything that happens, whether of moment or no account, and reports to the Great Mogul whatever is done or spoke of; but with so soft a pen that nothing may offend, considering the profound veneration due to such a powerful prince, whose frowns are mortal."

quite after the most approved style of the district reporter of a great modern newspaper. A single instance in proof of this may be cited. It is to be found in the following entry which appears in the Surat Records under date February 12, 1698:—

"'Some time since Alcorraw or newspaper was read to him (the Emperor Aurungzebe) from a place called Amphaum on the other side Bengal wherein was wrote that for seven days together were seen these diverse prodigys, the ground all about rent with earthquakes and quantitys of fish were vomited up from ye frightful hollowness. In Sunneen, an adjacent village, a large pagoda (a place of ye Gentue's superstitious worship) sunk down with horrid convulsions of the earth and most of the inhabitants were seized with feavers, tremblings and fluxes and preternatural itchings (and) dyed. The milk in ye vessels for three days together became putrid blood. A monster without a head and with his eyes placed in his breast every night cryed out with a horrid noise 'Destroy and Kill.'. At hearing this read the old King said unconcerned, 'twas the twelfth century when the Prophet foretold strange things in nature should happen and these were the less to be admired at not showing any apprehensions it might portend disturbances or commotions in his Empire."

The Harcoora's love of sensation was unfortunately allied with less estimable qualities which

made him a power to be feared in the sphere of his official duties. By distorting the information periodically despatched to the Imperial Court, by suppressing some facts and giving undue prominence to others, he was able to exercise a malign influence over the fortunes and even the lives of individuals who had not taken the precaution to gain his favour by liberal subsidies. He was, bluntly stated, a blackmailer who exercised his nefarious calling with a skill and unscrupulousness worthy of his modern prototypes in the shady realms of financial journalism. How powerful was the influence for evil of the Surat Harcoora we shall see as the narrative proceeds. Suffice it now to say that in him were typified all the vices of a class which was a product of the peculiar administrative system of the Moguls and which battened on its corruption.

From the Government we pass by a natural stage to the people. In the seventeenth century, as to a large extent is the case to-day, Surat had a varied population divided for the most part into the two principal Indian racial elements—Mohammedan and Hindu—but including some interesting subdivisions which gave the city its distinctive commercial character. On the Mohammedan side were and are the Memon Borahs, a race of born traders who to-day equip the small "Europe" shops of the Indian bazaars and contribute the "box-wallahs"—the itinerant packmen—who

haunt hotel verandahs and beset with their patient solicitation the tourist wanderer in the byways of Indian cities.

The leader of the Borah community at Surat in Annesley's day was Abdul Guffore, or Abdul Jafar, a man of singular energy and enterprise, who in a few years built up a great fortune by successful ventures in shipping. This individual, as will be seen when the narrative reaches a later stage, played a leading part in the drama of Annesley's life and, indeed, was a conspicuous figure in the history of Western India in the closing decades of the seventeenth century. Contemporary British writers who knew him intimately give a curious picture of the man with his unresting enterprise and his ambition to figure as a great shipping magnate.

As a set-off to this business aspect of his character we have a story by Captain Alexander Hamilton, the interloping Scotch captain, that Abdul Guffore belonged to a peculiar sect of the Borahs which practised abominable rites akin to the sexuality of the Sivaite worship, from which they were probably derived. Aurungzebe, who had a good deal of the Puritan in his nature, when, as with Solomon in his old age, all had become vanity, took stringent measures to suppress these excesses of the faithful. But the wily Borah magnate of Surat appears not to have been greatly affected by his Imperial master's decrees. If he did not

die in the odour of sanctity he at all events justified his mercantile insight by leaving an immense fortune estimated at the then value of eighty-five lakhs—about a million pounds sterling of the currency of the period and probably in value equal to double or treble the same amount to-day. Tradition long lingered in Western India over his commercial sagacity and his amazing rise from poverty to the height of fortune. A popular survival of his memory is to be found in the fact that his descendants in Surat are known locally as the *panchasiwallas*—The Eighty-Fivers—in allusion to the value of the estate he left.

Hindoos, as the conquered race, occupied inevitably an inferior place in the community. Nevertheless, a very effective counterpoise to the Borahs was supplied by the Banians, a sect of Jains who were, and are, famous in the life and trade of Western India. This community unites to a keen commercial aptitude a Quaker-like pertinacity in carrying its religious beliefs to their logical extremes. The transmigration of souls is an essential part of their creed; so you will find in Western India the Banian occupying his leisure time by feeding ants with sugar in public places and expending his surplus cash in supporting animal hospitals where the halt, the lame and the blind of brute creation are carefully tended until death closes their sufferings.

Street urchins in Bombay levy a kind of black-

mail upon the tender-hearted members of the community by capturing a sparrow, a pigeon, or some small animal, and in the presence of a wealthy Banian threatening to kill the victim unless a ransom is paid for its life. The stratagem rarely fails of success, so firmly fixed in the Banian's breast is the principle of the sacredness of life. A similar practice appears to have obtained in Annesley's day at Surat among the young factors according to Ovington, the chaplain. "Sometimes," says the worthy cleric, "the young men enter with a gun or small fowling-piece into the fields and enclosures adjoining to the habitations and there make a show of shooting sparrows, turtle-doves or other small birds among the trees, which when the Banian observes (as it is designed he should) he runs in haste as it were for life, to bribe the fowler not only with courteous expressions and fair speeches but with ready money not to persist in his diversion." On the authority of the same writer we are told that such "tongue tempests" as the Banians permit themselves are termed "Banian fights," for they never result in blows or bloodshed. This excessive tenderness and humility Annesley found, to his cost, was only a part of the Banian character. Combined with it was a remarkable genius for dissimulation and intrigue and a capacity for harbouring animosity which made them dangerous enemies.

At the head of the Banian community of Surat

at the end of the seventeenth century was a family of the name of Parrack or Parrakh, the leading members of which in succession were brokers to the East India Company. The position of native broker at a settlement like Surat was one of great financial responsibility and highly lucrative in ordinary peaceful times. Holders of the office bought country produce and sold English goods on commission, and often when trade was brisk their transactions on the Company's behalf reached a very high figure. Originally the brokership in the Parrakh family was vested in Bhimjee, its senior member, but about the time of Annesley's appearance in Surat this person died and the office then devolved upon his two brothers, Vittul and Kisso. These individuals were typical Banians with all the strength and weakness of their race. In a despatch to the Surat Council the directors described them as "errant knaves." The description was certainly not misapplied, and it has this pertinency to the story that the knavery was curiously interwoven with the life history of Annesley.

As to Annesley, all the time that the stirring events narrated in the previous chapters were proceeding he was steadily making progress as a junior official. In the early part of 1681 the Surat Council recorded that he had for some time been second in the office of accounts, "where his diligence is such as to oblige us to recommend him

to your further favour and incouragement as one who will in a short time be fitt for a more signall trust in your service." This high opinion of his seniors Annesley two years later imperilled by a transaction which narrowly involved him in the dangerous sin of interloping. A retired official, a former secretary at Surat, consigned to him on one of the Company's ships two ingots of gold of the value of £700. As the importation of specie was the special prerogative of the Company, this shipment was a high crime and misdemeanour. Annesley, when questioned on the subject by his superiors, was blandly ignorant as to the object of the consignment. A brother official, whose name had become involved in the business, was equally at a loss to know what possible reason the late secretary could have for sending out this gold. The Council, unable to get at the bottom of the affair, directed that the gold should be sent back home so that "it would lye in the Honourable Company's power to seize it."

This incident of the gold excited the more attention because it occurred at the time when those "naughty men," Petit and Bowcher, officials of the Company who had turned interlopers, were in the height of their career of infamy. In the records we have many lurid references to their "base and unparalleled actings," and we find the opinion again and again solemnly recorded that unless these "wicked and shameless" persons

were removed the Company's interests would suffer very seriously. But over and above their commercial iniquity was the apostacy which Petit was popularly believed to contemplate. The Council were willing if they could "to prevent soe great a blurr" as would fall upon their religion if the rascally interloper did "turn Moor"—an act which his ill principles made not unlikely, and consequently they intimated they would use their best endeavours to have public examples made of the precious pair to prevent others from following in their footsteps. The position was made the more deplorable at this juncture by the fact that the Company's chaplain at Bombay, Mr. Watton, "hath been too greate a scandal to his coat." What precisely the poor man did to earn this censure we are not told, but from the fact that he was accused of "adding to his other naughtiness by siding with the rebels," it is fairly clear that he was tainted with the common malady of interloping.

At the time that the Surat Council were so deeply concerned for Petit's spiritual welfare, he and his brother in iniquity were in the custody of the Governor on account of large debts due to native traders. An application to that functionary that he should hand over these unfaithful servants of the Company for the punishment they deserved was refused, the Governor excusing himself on the ground that he had no power to comply. Meanwhile, the imprisoned interlopers were

writing to the captains of ships in port enjoining them to disregard the orders of Sir John Child. "You will hear a parcell of threatening stories made to frighten children," they genially remarked in one of their letters, "but," they added, "your judgment will tell you better things. The Company have got a madman for their president and a parcell of parasites to their Council who echo all his actions with applause." However, in a short time they hoped to curb his tyranny.

When these communications were written the interlopers were awaiting a reply to their application for permission to visit the Emperor Aurungzebe's Court. In due course the *perwannah*, or permit, came to hand. "On which ye town was not big enough for them," wrote the Surat Council. "All us they looked on as a small morsell; to downe us not sufficient, but the Governor must be swallowed too; and Bimjee Parrack with his whole family . . . a *Phirmand* they would have from ye King in a much more authentick manner and with greater privileges than your Honour had, making a very great noise, and great preparations were made for their journeying: all sorts of rich cloathes made and many of them after the manner of the Moors; 2 pallankeens fitted up and that very richly; 2 flags made; a tent bought."

In the end virtue, personified by Sir John Child, triumphed to the extent at all events that Petit and Bowcher's ambitious designs were frustrated

through the influence of the Governor. Such friendliness, the Surat Council considered, deserved recognition. "This Governor," they recorded in their official consultations under date June 5, 1683, "having shown many kind offices, particularly in holding to our sides against Petit and Bowcher, for which he has had little or no acknowledgment by way of present hitherto, (we) having private notice that a handsome sett of horse furniture would be very acceptable to him, and well knowing how absolutely necessary such charges are for a remembrance sometimes to keep Governors and Ministers of State that are capable of doing us kindness firme to our interests, (we) concluded to fitt up a silver bridle and sadle with silver stirrups and appurtenances to be presented to him." The gift was only one of many of a similar kind made to the principal Mogul representatives. English "horse furniture" had a great vogue in the India of that day, its high finish and massive splendour appealing to the love of fine things inherent in the Indian mind. English dogs were another extremely popular and acceptable form of gift. Nearly every ship carried out specimens of familiar breeds whose courageous qualities were keenly appreciated by the sport-loving Mogul officials.

Annesley after his first slip had the discretion to keep off the dangerous ground of the interloper's territory. He appears to have stuck to his books

with assiduity, and to have won a position of increasing importance in the factory. Once he was sent on a mission to the Company's settlements in the Persian Gulf. His duty, which was to disentangle the confused accounts of the factories in that locality, seems to have been discharged to the satisfaction of the Council, for shortly afterwards they mention him as one deserving promotion. A recommendation of this character was an almost certain prelude to preferment in those days. In Annesley's case it was followed very quickly by his elevation to the second seat at the Council board. It is highly probable that ere he reached this position he had become a married man.

Within a year or two we find him being reported by a superior authority in Bombay for living out of the factory. This would scarcely have occurred if he had remained single, as in that case there would have been no inducement to quit the comfortable quarters at the factory, where good cheer and congenial companionship were always to be obtained. Most likely he had a pleasant house, one of many which were rising at this period outside the old town. Here amid the glowing colour of a characteristically tropical environment he would have been able in the domestic circle to mitigate the hardships of exile. Forbes, the genial author of the famous *Oriental Memoirs*, gives in his work a charming picture of how a half-century

or more after Annesley's day he near the same spot cultivated the quiet joys of a life in Guzerat.

Before concluding the chapter it may be helpful to a clear understanding of the English position in India at this period to give a survey of the Company's activities as they are revealed in the records of their commercial transactions. Trade generally, whether that conducted by the Company, or the less regular operations carried on in the course of private trade in miscellaneous commodities lying outside the scope of official action, was of a curiously composite character. Prominent amongst the exports to India were English woollen goods of various kinds, iron guns, sword blades, and novelties of every type calculated to attract the vagrant fancy of the wealthy Indian whose demand for new sensations was, and is, insatiable. Though English cloths were little adapted to the Indian climate, the Company, in the absence, perhaps, of any other suitable medium of exchange amongst the manufactured products of the England of that period, pushed them with untiring energy. At the directors' instigation the Company's servants in Bombay during Aungier's administration had a portion of their emoluments paid to them in cloth material known as *Perpetuano*,[1] in the hope that by the English wearing this fabric a fashion

[1] *Perpetuana*, also *perpetuano*. A durable fabric of wool manufactured in England from the sixteenth century (cf. the similar names, everlasting, durance, lasting, etc.).

would be set amongst the Christian inhabitants of the island which would tend to the Company's enrichment. Between the discontent evoked amongst the victims at the Company's arbitrary action and the poverty of the community induced by the troubles which beset the island, the experiment came to naught.

As a set off to this trade in English cloth was an even larger traffic from India in the woven fabrics of the East. Silk, manufactured and raw, constituted an important branch of the Company's Indian trade and notably that with Bengal. Huge shipments of the material known as taffetas were made from year to year until the Turkey Company, who had previously had a monopoly of the silk trade in 1680, memorialised the King to suppress the traffic. Cotton manufactured goods, the muslins, the calicoes, and the other serviceable productions of the then all-powerful Indian looms, contributed another important feature of the Company's import transactions. From the Broach district in Western India was secured in large quantities a highly popular cotton cloth of the day which went by the name of Baftas. It had great vogue in England at the period, as indeed had most of the Indian cotton goods. So profitable was the trade as a whole that special measures were adopted by the Company to stimulate the production. At Bombay in the earliest years a community of cotton weavers was established under Aungier's

direction, but bad times coming these artisans fled the island, leaving it to a later generation in a more scientific age to create the cotton-manufacturing industry which makes Bombay to-day "the Manchester of India." Raw cotton was shipped home as well as the manufactured material. In order that the product might be properly prepared for shipment, screws were sent out, the pioneers of an immense export from England of cotton-pressing apparatus.

This cotton experiment, as one of the first efforts directed from England to promote the economic development of India, has peculiar interest. It harmonised with a spirit then abroad to make India for the English something more than a mere entrepôt for the exchange of commercial products. Aungier in his correspondence supplies a striking example of the keenness with which the idea of economic exploitation was followed. In superintending a series of excavations for defensive purposes the President lighted upon some stone which seemed to his quick eye to be impregnated with iron. Having made an experiment, he "found it to be very good iron," though he could not say what the cost of extracting the metal would be. He asked the directors to send out a mineral expert and also some books that treated of the subject of mineralogy, as he was convinced that there were great potentialities in the rocky substratum of the island. Nothing further appears to have been

done in the matter either by Aungier or the directors. Even if the deposits were as rich as Aungier believed them to be, the cost of smelting would probably have proved prohibitive, for Bombay was so deficient in fuel at this period that we find the Council writing home imploring the directors to despatch a consignment of "sea cole."

Spices played a large part in the Company's commercial transactions in the East in the seventeenth century. Pepper, cinnamon and cloves were secured mainly from Malaya and the islands of the Archipelago, but Western India contributed occasional shipments, and no effort was spared to increase the cultivation, especially of the former commodity. Surat, however, was more a centre for the aromatic spices of less popular use, such as frankincense, spikenard, and myrrh. Musk was freely and extensively traded in by the Company, but this commodity, which was derived principally from Bhutan, was a speciality of the establishments of Eastern rather than Western India. Associated in the Company's trade with the aromatics was ivory, which in the guise of "elephants' teeth" figures very prominently in the seventeenth century shipments from Surat and Bombay.

Shellac was another article largely handled, and that it was not always what it should have been is shown by an indignant complaint made by the directors in reference to a consignment

reaching England in 1684—"that it was the refuge (refuse ?) of all the country, being dirty, thick and drossy." Tin, imported from Malaya, furnished the opportunity of lucrative dealings both at Bombay and Surat, and there was a brisk market at times for *Tutenague*—white copper or zinc—which came from the same part of the East. Nothing really went amiss to the directors if they saw an opportunity for trade profit. At one time it was quite a large vendor of hookahs made from Eastern models in the manufacturing districts of England. The purely trading functions of the Company, however, were at this juncture distinctly on the wane, especially in Western India. The dawn of the new era of settled occupation and administrative responsibility was still a long way off, but the old order had had its day.

CHAPTER VI

The Sidhi's Invasion of Bombay

Sir John Child's expedition to Surat—Abortive negotiations with the Governor—Child quits Surat and makes war on the native shipping—Ominous attitude of the Sidhi or Mogul Admiral—Child issues an ultimatum to him—Misgivings of the English Governor as to the Company's policy—The Sidhi invades Bombay—Desperate resistance of the garrison—Perilous state of affairs—Child despatches a mission to the Emperor Aurungzebe to sue for peace—He is ready to "Kiss the floor of all servile offices"—His despondent views of the English position in Western India—The Surat Factors in confinement—Aurungzebe agrees to peace—Death of Child—His character.

SIR JOHN CHILD'S expedition to Surat in October, 1688, as has been indicated, was part of the general scheme for compelling the Mogul Government to do justice to the English traders in his dominions. A few months previously, on the other side of India, Job Charnock, the founder of Calcutta, had extorted a peace from the local Governor by his gallant defence at Hijili, where for three months the sturdy old factor had maintained an unequal fight against thousands of Mogul troops,

and finally had been permitted to evacuate what was really an untenable position with all the honours of war. This was a real triumph for the English, and it is highly probable, as has been previously stated, that the success then won had a considerable influence in determining Sir John Child to make his own bid for independence at Surat. If he had been endowed with Charnock's shrewdness and capacity for dealing with Indians, he might have made an equal impression on the Mogul mind. But these were qualities which he especially lacked, and he soon landed himself in a maze of difficulties in which his mingled pomposity and bluster were matched against the Oriental cunning and unscrupulousness of the Mogul officials.

At first the Governor of Surat played with the idea of granting the English restitution for past wrongs associated with the issue of a new *farman* confirming and extending their powers. The waiting game was one which suited his purpose, since it enabled him to perfect his plans, and in the interval secure orders from Court relative to the action he was to take against the insolent unbelievers. Though thoroughly deceived by these tactics, Child was sufficiently alive to possibilities not to place himself too much in the Mogul power. He kept his quarters on board ship and conducted all his negotiations from Swally Marine. The farce of discussion was kept up until the end of December,

when the Governor threw off the mask and commenced open hostilities. His first action was to seize Bartholomew Harris, the chief of the Council at Surat, and Gladman, one of his colleagues, together with the Company's brokers, whom he had enticed to the Palace by a message that he had good news to communicate from Court. Simultaneously a guard was placed over the English factory and a strong party of horse and foot was sent to Swally with orders to secure Child, alive or dead. The latter part of the programme miscarried, but only because early news of the events at the Palace had been sent to Swally by Annesley by the hands of a trusty servant.

Immediately Child learned how matters stood, he issued orders for the preparation of the shipping against further eventualities. In a short space of time the entire squadron had weighed anchor and quitted the " Hole " for the open roadstead, where there was greater freedom for manœuvring. The next four days were occupied with negotiations with the Governor in the hope, vain as it proved, that he might be induced to relent in view of the serious threat that the Company's well-armed ships constituted to the Mogul shipping. On the 30th December, when it had become abundantly clear even to Child's somewhat muddled understanding that he had been over-reached by his wily opponent, the fleet went down to the mouth of the river, where it remained five days longer blockading the port.

Tiring at length of inaction, Child took the bold, and as it proved fatal, course of waging war on the enemy's sea trade. On his way down the coast he seized every floating thing he encountered that could by any stretch of language be regarded as "Moor shipping." His list of prizes ultimately included forty large ships, four small ships and thirty-six grabs [1] and gallevats.[2] These were all taken to Bombay, where their cargoes, consisting for the most part of grain, oil and other country produce, were confiscated.

If Child had been as strong as his action, he might have weathered the storm which his violence provoked. His only safe course when he had thrown down his challenge with such unmeasured violence was to organise his forces and be in readiness to forestall the counter-attack which he must have known would be made. But his temperament was not a fighting one, and when he had effected his *coup* he seems to have settled down in Bombay to the ordinary routine of business.

Even when ugly stories reached the island of a great concentration of the Sidhi's forces across the

[1] *Grab*, from the Arabic *ghorab*, a raven. A galley. The word was applied at different periods to vessels larger than a mere galley.—HOBSON JOBSON.

[2] *Gallevat*, the name applied to a kind of galley or war boat with oars, of small draught of water which continued to be employed on the West Coast of India down to the latter half of the eighteenth century.—*Id.*

harbour, and an almost panic-stricken migration of the inhabitants pointed to the imminence of a crisis, Child was not fully aroused. He contented himself with sending a message by "a cunning trusty fellow" warning the Sidhi that if he moved his fleet from its station at Danda Rajapore on the other side of the harbour it would be attacked. As no reply was vouchsafed by the Sidhi, Child should have known that he was intent on hostilities and should have carried the war into the enemy's country, which he could very well have done with the ships then at his disposal. Instead of this he sat down in the fort inditing despatches home, writing valiantly of its being "better to fight it out than purchase a peace that will not only be dishonourable and base and mean, but bring with it great evils and such continual uncertainty to your trade that it may be insupportable." "For success in all things," continued the President in his most unctuous style, "we must leave that to God, but our utmost endeavours as in duty bound shall not be wanting to advance your interest, and stand by it wee will to the last drop of blood in our bodys."

The heroic mood did not last to the end of the despatch. Child became almost lachrymose, as he contemplated the course of recent events in India. "Wee are," he wrote, "very much troubled that soe brave an undertaking of your Honours should meet with noe better success hitherto. None can blame your Honours, nor that worthy person Sir

Josiah Child for it, but such as are enemys to brave designs to public spirited men or are like those notable wise sort of people in the world that pass their judgments by the success they see without duely considering." "It is true," concluded the writer in a final outburst of common sense, "that soe great an affair as making war on the Mogull or, indeed, any other potentate soe remote from your Honours should wee think have been done with less noise and left wholly to be commenced by your servants abroad to lay hold an opportunity as they might see best."

Admirable sentiments these, and if Sir John Child had lived up to them he would not have contributed his not insignificant share to making war on the Mogul with noisy accompaniments that simply aroused the enemy to wrath. But the situation he had to meet did not lend itself to philosophy. It called urgently for prompt and vigorous action. The enemy in fact was at hand, and in such strength that nothing less than the entire available resources of the Company on the spot could avert a disaster.

The Sidhi, as the Mogul admiral was called, was one of a line of sable adventurers of African blood, who, enrolled under the Mogul flag, had established themselves in the seventeenth century in the vicinity of Bombay. They had under them a mixed force of cut-throats banded together by a common love of plunder and by the Mohammedan creed. The great bulk of them were pirates, who

between the intervals of the more serious business of war did miscellaneous freebooting on their own account. The Mogul "fleet" consisted of a rare assortment of craft from large vessels of 300 or 400 tons armed with heavy ordnance to row-boats, in which a few matchlock-men and spearmen found cramped accommodation. As an opponent of well-found European squadron of ships this "Navy" was contemptible, but as a medium for the delivery of a land attack on an island easily approached from a number of points it was not to be despised. As Bombay was then situated, it was, in fact, about as formidable a native force as could have been brought against it. The fortifications had been so neglected that the island can be said to have had only one really defensible position—the fort—and that was not completely finished, one of the bastions still being wanting.

In May the Sidhi's threats materialised in an invasion of the island. The weak forces available for defence were quickly overcome, and the invading hosts established themselves at Syon, Mahim, and other outlying points. The militia, on whom chief reliance was placed for the protection of the more distant points, proved but a broken reed. The bulk of them fled without firing a shot, and those who stood their ground were too few in numbers to stay the rush of the thousands of fighting men landed from the Sidhi's fleet. In a very short time the small English garrison, consisting

of not more than 200 men with about an equal number of loyal native troops—chiefly sturdy Bandareens or toddy drawers—were besieged in the Fort, fighting a desperate battle against daily increasing odds. Prodigies of valour were performed by the handful of Englishmen, but they could do nothing effective against an enemy whose numbers seemed rather to increase than diminish after every engagement. "He has been soundly banged, and wee have killed abundance of his multitudes," wrote the Council in December, "but he as fast fills them up againe whilst wee cannot repair our losses."

To make matters worse, the garrison suffered from the action of deserters, who were more formidable foes to the defenders "than 100 black enemies," since they gave their new associates the advantage of their military skill, teaching them "the art of mineing and sheltering themselves in trenches and basket works" with such effect, says Ovington,[1] that they were "able in time to bombard the Fort with massive stones instead of iron balls, while our shot from thence was scarce able to annoy them."

Child, when too late, realised the blunder he had committed in inviting this attack upon the island at a time when its defences, owing to his neglect, were so miserably inadequate to repel an invader.

[1] *A Voyage to Surat in the year* 1689, by J. Ovington, M.A., Chaplain to his Majesty. London, 1696.

On a review of the circumstances he decided to sue for peace through a special mission consisting of George Weldon, a member of his Council, and a Jew named Navarro, who had influential friends at Aurungzebe's Court and was likely to be of valuable assistance in pulling the strings in the traditional Oriental fashion.

Child's frame of mind in approaching Aurungzebe is curiously illustrated in the language of a petition which he forwarded to the Emperor in advance of his emissaries. These were the introductory sentences: "The petition of the last of your servants, Sir John Child, Generall of the English nation, like a grain of sand and with the greatest regard to your Majesty's person, Amber-like influence, Lord of Beneficence and Liberalitie, Solomon-like Throne, Epitome of Priesthood, Scanderberg-like[1] wisdom, Heavenly judgement, Potentate of the World, Centre of Security, Emperour of the Earth and of the Age, Object of all Sublunary Things, the Divine Shadow of the Holy Prophet Mahomet Orangzeib, whose person and kingdom the Divine powers long prosper and continue that his righteousness and justice may spread over the whole world and everlastingly continue for the benefit of its inhabitants, representeth after due recommendation of servitude and vassalage, with humility and lowliness of mind, kissing the floor of all servile offices with lips of

[1] Alexander-like wisdom. Iskander is the Indian name for the great Macedonian.

respect and obsequiousness and with a heart bowed down to your fame and greatness."

Even allowing for the necessary fulsomeness of a petition written in the Persian language as this was, it must be conceded that Child did very effectively "kiss the floor of all servile offices." It was the man's nature so to do, and he no doubt had the excuse that he was only following the prevailing fashion amongst the English in their intercourse with authority in India. But his grovelling style of address contrasts very strikingly with the robust periods of Sir Josiah Child and still more remarkably with the petitioner's own actions in the early stage of the rupture. The explanation is that by this time he was so completely disillusioned on the subject of English ascendancy in India that he was inclined to be pessimistic. "This island," he wrote, "lyes too neere potent princes that with multitudes may and can invade it, and there is no trust for its defence with any security but only in our English, and at the best times there can be but few of them in comparison with our enemys, nay in computation but one in a thousand and wee too far off our native country or any other place that may afford us assistance in any reasonable time."

In another communication of the same date (June 7, 1689) he wrote: "The Moors are cunning enough and know their own interest very well, but those in Government are much above trade and soe absolute in the severall places that they rob and

plunder whom they please without being controuled." Later on in the year he returned to the question of the Company's position in Western India, declaring that the Council believed that Bombay would never be so important a position as the directors thought it would be. It was a pleasant enough place, though not so healthful as could be wished. "God preserve it to you and may it prove of greater value and estimation to the nation than wee ever fancy it will," concluded in melancholy vein Child's despatch.

The prevailing despondency in official quarters in Bombay at this juncture was accentuated by the startling development of events that had taken place in the homeland. At first there was evidently no idea that the differences between James and his Parliament would lead to anything more serious than a passing political storm. The directors wrote in this sense and rather went out of their way to give their despatches a tinge of Jacobean loyalty. Gradually, however, the momentous character of the changes that were being effected was manifested to the understandings of Child and his colleagues. Gravely disquieting as the news was, especially when the issue of the Revolution of 1688 was still uncertain, it had a doubly unpleasant aspect owing to the form in which it was clothed by the Company's numerous enemies. The Dutch publicly declared that "their Prince had taken England and wholly subdued it to his obedience."

The literal truth thus expressed was hard to combat, and the perplexed Council in Bombay were at their wits' end to cope with the reports derogatory to the English which at this time were in free circulation all over India through Dutch, French, and Portuguese agencies. Happily for the national interests which the East India Company represented, Aurungzebe was thoroughly well informed as to the political situation in Europe. Baroon, the Dutch Ambassador who went on a mission to the Mogul Court at this time, discovered this to his confusion when he attempted to disparage the English, representing them as a contemptible people who had been compelled to submit to the authority of a Dutch King.

The Emperor listened to his diatribe in silence and when he had done quietly suggested to him that as the Dutch were such a superior people to the English they should drive them out of his dominions and secure a monopoly of the European trade. Disconcerted by this shrewd thrust Baroon stammered out something about not being able to act without instructions. Thereupon Aurungzebe plainly told him what was really in his mind. He said "that Holland must be an insignificant country, for the King of France had conquered it in a few days and would never have been expelled if the English had not interfered, that in reality England held the balance of power in Europe and that if she were not to do so the Emperor of Ger-

many or the King of France would conquer Holland in a single campaign." [1]

Not less active and perhaps more mischievous than the foreign depreciators of the English at this crisis were the old servants of the Company who had established themselves on the coast as interlopers. One of these, a certain Captain Consett, when matters were very black in Bombay, went about Surat declaring that the island and fort had "certainly gone." The story was too probable not to be believed and the credit of the Company fell to zero. Child, in writing to the directors in the closing days of 1689, enlarged upon the injurious influence exercised by false reports of this character. "If your Honours and the laws meet (deal ?) not with him for it and his base tongue, Wee hope God will," piously observed the General. "And truly," he added, "to deal plainly with your Honours, you have to our sorrows many such black sheep amongst us that wee fear will not stick to do the like notwithstanding their cringing and creeping to your Honours for employ in England, when here quite forget you and your interest and desire none but their own. The strange reports from England wee believe makes naughty people show themselves more than otherwise they would: but (concluded Child in a final flight of piety) let us bless God for all things, be content in our conditions, and behave ourselves like men that we may

[1] Bruce's *Annals of the East India Company.*

make ourselves acceptable to God and good men. which is our chief business in this world."

All this time the officials of the Surat establishment were being subjected to the rigours of imprisonment. Annesley and some of the other subordinate members of the staff were for a time left at liberty, but eventually the entire body of English officials were confined. They were kept in the town until the end of 1689, when the orders were so far relaxed as to permit their return to the factory. It was, however, only a change of prison, for a strong guard was put over them and all were heavily ironed to prevent any possibility of escape. In fact, their humiliation was as complete as Mogul ingenuity and arrogance could make it.

Meanwhile, the mission to Aurungzebe was making headway. Weldon and his colleague proved shrewd envoys and they had influential friends amongst the nobles, who smoothed their path for them. Moreover, an atmosphere of peace pervaded the Emperor's Court at the time of their appearance. There were powerful interests arraying themselves in the Company's favour. Neither the leading Court officials nor the Surat merchants wanted to see the English ruined: the one because of the prospective loss of bribes, the other for fear that the Company's liabilities to them would not be liquidated. Furthermore, the impression at Court was that Bombay was a much stronger

place than it actually was and that its reduction would involve the Mogul Government in enormous additional expense. By a subtle process peculiar to Eastern Courts these influences were gradually blended in a general representation to the Emperor in favour of the granting of the Bombay Council's prayer. Aurungzebe, whose wrath had to some extent cooled since the first outburst of passion excited by the violent action of the Company's representative, now graciously extended his pardon to the unbelievers who had so submissively shown their contrition for past offences.

Before the news of the success of Weldon's mission reached Bombay, Sir John Child had gone to his last account. Ovington declares that remorse for his part in the neglect of the fortifications which so greatly facilitated the Sidhi's invasion tended to shorten his days. It may well have been so as the evils of the failure of the niggardly policy he had directed were too patent to be ignored by the most inveterate self-apologist. But we need not seek for any special cause for the death of an English functionary in seventeenth-century India, for nothing is more impressive in the records of those days than the constant succession of changes due to climatic influences. Yet strangely enough, though plague was raging in Western India in the years with which the narrative is now dealing, there does not appear to have been a single case of death from that disease amongst the English community.

CHAPTER VII

Peace with the Mogul

Position of officials after Child's death—Career of Vaux the Deputy-Governor of Bombay—Vaux proceeds to Surat to receive the Emperor's *farman*—Elaborate arrangements for the ceremony—The Factors' procession through the City. *Farman* handed over—The *farman* translated—A great disappointment—The Factors "basely deceived" by a "perfidious Court"—The East India Company's supremacy threatened by formidable rivals—Gloomy state of affairs in Western India—Terrible mortality in Bombay—Bartholomew Harris becomes President of Surat and Annesley senior member of Council—Court of Directors' distrust of the management of their affairs at Surat—Annesley's influence—Harris is prevented from leaving Surat for Bombay by the local officials—The Company appoints Sir John Goldsborough to the supreme charge of its affairs in India and despatches Sir John Gayer to Bombay as Governor—Gayer's instructions—Annesley incurs the censure of the directors—Precarious position of the Company's affairs—The French capture four of the Company's vessels—Indomitable spirit of the directors.

A PECULIAR situation was created in the official organisation of the Company in Western India by Sir John Child's death. The

chief position now devolved upon Bartholomew Harris, the Agent at Surat, but Harris and the second in office, Annesley, were close prisoners. unable to move a finger in official work without the Governor's sanction. The real responsibility, therefore, was in the hands of the Deputy-Governor of Bombay, John Vaux, an official who was the junior of Harris. Vaux had commenced his career as book-keeper to Sir Josiah Child and had been sent out to India by the great man a few years previously with the special object of assisting in the suppression of interloping. Though utterly devoid of legal training he was, soon after his arrival in Bombay, appointed Assistant Judge, to the intense disgust of Dr. St. John, the head of the judiciary, who was a competent lawyer and who, not without good reason, distrusted the intrusion of a novice from home coming with no greater recommendation than the favour of the Autocrat of India House.

Vaux, much to the disappointment of his patron, failed to deal out the stern punishment to the rascally intruders that was so desirable in the Company's interests. Sir Josiah Child wrote out to him, upbraiding him for his scruples as to the legality of coercive measures. The laws, the writer said, "were a heap of nonsense compiled by a few country gentlemen," and were utterly unfit for the regulation of a great commercial enterprise such as that of the Company. "My orders, sir," he

added, "are to be your rules, and not the laws of England." Vaux, at this time, cared as little for Child's wishes as that individual did for the laws of England. He had caught the prevailing contagion—was in fact the friend and associate of interlopers rather than their enemy. Soon he was to fall entirely from grace, as Petit and Bowcher and other notorious "traitors" had done before him, but, meanwhile, he was to make the most of the brief authority in which he was dressed as became his temperament, which was prone to vain display.

When the news of Aurungzebe's decision in favour of peace reached Bombay, Vaux decided to proceed to Surat in order that the new *farman* might be received with all the honour and dignity that properly attached to so important a mark of Imperial favour. This rescript, it was confidently expected, would confer new and valuable privileges upon the Company, while old wrongs would be redressed and an end be put to the tyrannical rule of the local officials under which the English had so long suffered. Vaux had not committed himself so deeply with the interlopers that he could not pose still as the zealous upholder of the Company's rights at a moment of crisis. With a flattering vision of a new *régime* in which, as was his due, he was to figure in a leading position, he arrived off Surat at the end of March, 1689. He was detained at the river's mouth until April 4, when the inti-

mation was conveyed to him that "the much famed Phirmand" had arrived. On landing the next day he was joined by Harris and Annesley and the other prisoners who had just previously been released from their long and irksome confinement.

Without loss of time Vaux, attended by an imposing escort, proceeded to a garden to the southward of the city, where he was received in friendly fashion by the Governor and other high officials. After a time spent in the exchange of the usual meaningless compliments of an Oriental *durbar* the Deputy-Governor was advised as to the arrangements for *the* ceremony of the day—the reception of the *farman*. This he was told was to take place at a point some miles away to the eastward of the city, where the Imperial officials had their camp.

Impressed with his reception and entering fully into the plans so thoughtfully made by the Governor for emphasising the importance of the *farman*, Vaux summoned the whole of the factory staff to accompany him on this the final stage of his mission. Quite an elaborate procession was thus formed, and as the route took the party through the heart of the city the display lost nothing in publicity. The Imperial functionaries were as affable and friendly as the Governor had been earlier. They had the *farman* ready in all the glory of its Oriental trappings, and by its side was the *serpaw* or dress of honour which invariably accom-

panied the written mark of Imperial favour. The Englishmen took in the scene with sparkling eyes and heightened colour. At last it seemed they were able once more to lift their heads. In all the outward forms of Eastern courtesy the precious *farman* was handed to Vaux, and then the procession was re-formed and a triumphant return was made to the factory.

Great was the curiosity to know the precise terms in which Aurungzebe had conveyed his gracious privileges. The Company's Persian secretary was immediately set to work upon the document. The translation when forthcoming caused a sensation. The *farman* recited that "the English having made a most humble submissive petition that the ill crimes they have done may be pardoned and requested another Phirmand to make their being forgiven manifest and sent their Vakeels[1] to the Heavenly Palace, the most illustrious in the world, to get the Royall favour" and they also having agreed to pay a fine of 150,000 rupees to his "noble treasury resembling the sun," and promised that they "would restore the merchants' goods they took away to the owners of them," and "would walk by the ancient customs of the port and behave themselves for the future, therefore, his Majesty had pardoned their faults, mercifully forgiven them, and out of his princely condescension agrees that the present be put into the treasury of the port,

[1] Attorneys.

the merchants' goods returned, the town flourish and they follow their trade as in former times, and Mr. Child, who did the disgrace, be turned out and expelled."

Such was the wonderful new treaty of which so much had been expected. It fell like a bombshell into the company collected in the factory. "To our great amazement and sorrow," they wrote, "instead of a Phirmand answering to our articles and agreements we found it a worse sham story than the Phirmand that came down in Mucteer Can's[1] time." The directors would perceive "how basely your Honours have been abused by this most perfidious Court, and we do veryly persuade ourselves that our friends at Court have been most unworthily beguiled." They had no doubt, but the brutal truth remained that the price had to be paid for this sham *farman*. The emissaries of the Governor speedily appeared on the scene to make perfectly clear that no trade could be permitted until the indemnity was forthcoming. Swallowing their mortification with the best grace they could summon to their aid, the Surat Council sent to Bombay for the specie that was there and this was in due course handed over to the rapacious Mogul officials. Then with chastened feelings the little band of Englishmen addressed themselves to the heavy task of repairing the sorely shattered edifice of the Company's trade.

[1] Mukhter Khan, a former Governor of Surat.

All the time that the events just narrated were occurring the East India Company was struggling gallantly and for the most part ineffectually against its enemies. The movement designed to undermine its Eastern monopoly, with the advent of a new constitutional system, was daily assuming a more menacing aspect. Behind the influentially supported parliamentary campaign directed against the Company's interests loomed in menacing outline a new organisation which was later to bring the Company to the verge of disaster. Abroad all its ambitious schemes, involving in their prosecution an immense outlay of capital, were ending in failure only thinly disguised by such partial successes as that represented by the resettlement of the Bengal factory on the Hooghly on the spot where now stands the city of Calcutta.

In Western India especially the outlook for the English organisation was gloomy. The Sidhi's hosts in evacuating Bombay left it a wreck. What they could not carry away they destroyed, and a mere waste existed where before had been thriving bazaars and productive fields and palm groves. Famine and disease stalked through its ruined and half-deserted streets. In the Fort a miserable remnant of the garrison was almost literally rotting away. Ovington, who landed in Bombay in 1690, gives a terrible picture of the demoralisation which darkly overshadowed the settlement. He could not, he said, without horror mention to what a pitch

all enormities were grown when the infection of a prevailing epidemic was at its height.

"Their principles of action and the consequent evil practices of the English," he proceeded, "forwarded their miseries and contributed to fill the air with those pestilential vapours that seized their vitals and speeded their hasty passage to the other world. Luxury, immodesty and a prostitute dissolution of manners found still new matter to work upon." In that awful time the English power in Bombay was almost overwhelmed by its own moral degradation. Only seventy men of the European strength were left for garrison duty. In a few months these had been reduced by one-half—the survivors a disease-stricken remnant serving only as a ghastly reminder of a rule that had almost vanished from the island.

It was in this darkest hour of the fortunes of the English in Western India that the disturbing news was received of the outbreak of war between Great Britain and France. The edifice was already tottering; it seemed now that nothing could save it, for the French Navy was powerful and well manned and the subjects of Louis XIV had already a firm grip on the trade which centred at Surat and were represented there by ambitious men who were eager to turn to account any circumstances that might favour their designs. In these broad outlines we have the outlook which confronted the little band of Englishmen who represented the

Company in Western India at this juncture. The position of affairs was calculated to carry a chill to their hearts when they surveyed their difficulties and noted how utterly unprepared they were to cope with so great an emergency.

Upon Harris and Annesley rested the chief burden of maintaining the English position at this crisis. They had been confirmed in their positions as Chief Agent and Second in Council respectively by the directors, who in fixing their official status clearly intimated that the higher rank was to carry no increase in the emoluments they had previously enjoyed. The Court acknowledged that the pair had had "a suffering time," but, they pointed out, so also had the Company, in consequence of the war, "all their estate lying dead in all places in that unhappy period," and they therefore expressed a hope that Harris would think himself well compensated by being made President, while they trusted that Annesley would be content with his definite promotion to the second office, carrying as it did the reversion to the chief position in the event of Harris's death.

Both men submitted to the decision with as much equanimity as they could muster, but beneath their fulsome acknowledgment of the favours received it is easy to detect a sub-current of dissatisfaction at the stinginess of their much-respected masters. That they were not content with this veiled protest, but proceeded to recoup

themselves for the deficiencies in their official pay by private trading and other perhaps less reputable methods, is apparent enough from the tenor of the records. Soon the despatches from home were racy with indignant protests against the mismanagement of their servants, the underlying suggestion of the rebukes being that they were making money at the Company's expense.

In one passage Harris and Annesley were told that a certain sale of cloth "is nothing to brag of, considering the state of the market at that time," and they were further pleasantly assured that in imagining that their sending home the ship *Benjamin* with such a miserable cargo would be an acceptable service to them "was such an idle vain slip of your pen that you ought to be ashamed to think of it." The directors' wrath overflowed to the question of some outstanding accounts amounting to £20,000 which the Council had been directed to adjust with the Parrakhs. "You have yielded too much to that ill man Vital Parrack," they hotly observed, "and too much slighted the Armenians that are honest men; and it is very impertinent that you write us Coja Minass & Hodges Zad's debts are cleared out of your Surat books as your account doth say."

In this communication we have the germ of the trouble which was to shadow Annesley's life to the end. The question at issue was some contracts which had been made with the Parrakhs. Annes-

ley's contention was that a part of the liability had been discharged. The directors, as is to be noted, held that there had been no settlement. They regarded the Parrakhs as "errant knaves," and they began strongly to suspect that Annesley was involved in their villainy.

As time went on circumstances tended in an increasing degree to place the principal power in Annesley's hands. Harris was a dull, heavy type of official whose constitutional weakness had been aggravated by a long period of Eastern residence culminating in the close imprisonment described in the preceding chapter. In such a man the disposition to lean upon a younger and more energetic colleague was strong, and Annesley was a good deal more than a promising junior. He had a profound knowledge of all the ramifications of the Company's business at Surat; he was intimately associated with the native trading community; and he was acquainted with all the network of intrigue which enmeshed the official life of the place.

An additional reason for casting the main burden upon him was the firm resolve that Harris had to shake the dust of Surat from his shoes. He was sick of the constraints imposed there, and, moreover, was receiving such insistent calls from Bombay that it was impossible to disregard them. One despatch forwarded to Surat about this period described in moving language the sad plight of the Company's servants there, asserting that if some-

thing was not soon done to remedy the situation absolute disaster would overwhelm the settlement. "'Tis the admiration [1] of the world," they wrote, "wee should lie in a manner foresaken all this while and more than enough to discourage any, and wee are forct to give faire words and all the incouragements wee can to those that are here, for few or none cares willingly to stay."

Applications to the Governor of Surat from the English Council for permission for the President to proceed to Bombay elicited only evasive and unsatisfactory answers. At length Harris sent Annesley to try his persuasive powers on the great man. Annesley penetrated to the inner recesses of the Governor's house, but "there being much companie and the Governor busie," he could not be permitted an audience. Later another effort was made, and this proving abortive, Harris and Annesley went together, and after much delay extorted a promise from the Governor that he would write to the King (Aurungzebe) on their behalf. Probably this was another subterfuge to keep the President chained to his post at Surat where he was

[1] Admiration was used at this period in quite a different sense from which the word is employed to-day: it meant wonder or surprise. Thus: "'Tis matter of admiracion to us that Mr Van Duren and Ensign Browne should both be out of Mayhim Fort at one time and leave the charge thereof to that hot headed Sergeant: such errors are not to be borne with."—Sir John Gayer's letter dated March 15, 1703/4, to Burmiston, Deputy-Governor of Bombay.

always at hand as a convenient whipping boy for the native authority. Whether this was the case or not, Harris never went to Bombay. Nor was Vaux permitted to return to resume his official career there.

According to Vaux's own account, he was detained at Surat through the intrigues of his colleagues. Their version of the affair was that he, having indiscreetly put himself in the power of the Mogul authorities, was held a hostage by them with the rest of the Company's staff. Whatever the origin of his detention may have been, Vaux at this time had fallen out of favour with his patron at India House. Some compromising letters that he had written home to his brother dealing in a strain of criticism with affairs in India got into the hands of the Company's enemies, and select passages from them were actually read in the House of Commons as part of an indictment of the Company's system. This outspokenness, of course, was high treason in the writer, and orders were swiftly sent out for his suspension.

Meanwhile, the Company, distrustful of their representatives on the spot, decided to despatch to India entirely new men to carry out its thoroughgoing policy against interlopers. To the supreme charge of its factories and settlements in India it appointed Sir John Goldsborough, and for the dual office of Governor of Bombay and the Company's Chief Agent in Western India it selected Sir John Gayer. The "two Johns," as they were

afterwards contemptuously dubbed by Vaux, went out with urgent instructions to strengthen the Company's position on the lines of a firm assertion of its rights whether in opposition to native abuses or the encroachments of interlopers. Gayer took with him a company of 120 English soldiers as reinforcements of the sorely depleted Bombay garrison. He was told to supplement these with twenty or thirty Madagascar "cofferyes,"[1] who would be "some kind of balance to the Topases."[2] And pray remember it's never safe to have too many of one sort of soldiers in such a remote garrison. BALLANCING of Power is THE TRUEST ART of GOVERNMENT," concluded the directors, emphasising the parting injunction by a profuse use of capitals. They here but anticipated the lines upon which the British Indian Army was ultimately formed. Indeed, it may truthfully be said that the entire British position in India was built up in accordance with the shrewd maxim of which the writer of Sir John Gayer's instructions—probably Sir Josiah Child—was evidently so extremely proud.

Sir John Gayer had been charged with definite

[1] Slaves recruited in Madagascar. Numbers of these unfortunate people were sent to all the Company's settlements at this period.

[2] Topaz. A name used in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries for dark-skinned or half-caste claimants of Portuguese descent and Christian profession.—HOBSON-JOBSON.

and peremptory orders to institute a strict investigation into the accounts of the Surat factory and to deal severely with all who had been guilty of irregularities. The death of Harris on May 10, 1694, a few months after Gayer's arrival, made doubly difficult a task which in any circumstances would have given him no ordinary trouble, for matters had gone from bad to worse with the Company's trade in Western India. The Company owed two million rupees, and shipments had become so small that the local traders had taken alarm and gave ready credence to the stories circulated by interlopers as to the coming extinction of the organisation. Such was the lack of confidence that there was a general talk of an embargo being laid upon the exports of the factory.

The Company's own brokers at this critical juncture were prominent in depressing their credit. Their attitude excited the bitter comments of Annesley, who made it perfectly clear in his communications that he as thoroughly distrusted them as did his employers. Meanwhile, the directors had their own views as to the causes of the unsatisfactory state of their affairs at Surat. They wrote savagely of the great carelessness of their Council there, and said that, were it not that "their thoughts are shamefully diverted from our public busyness by their too great private negotiations, it is impossible our ships should be so late despatched." They had repeatedly intimated their wishes to their

Council of Surat, "but of late years to so little purpose as if we had spoak to a deaf adder. All the blame now is laid upon Mr Harris, and we do believe he was very faulty, but we are no better satisfied with Mr Annesley's keeping our *Defence* and *Resolution* so late in the country and his long delay of sending home his accounts."

The reference to the late despatch of the *Defence* and the *Resolution* is the better to be understood when it is read in connection with another paragraph in the same despatch announcing the capture of those vessels off the coast of Ireland by the French, together with two other units of the Company's fleet and an interloping ship. This disaster, which was described "as the most fatal loss that ever this Company sustained since their first institution," did not quell the indomitable spirit of the adventurers of India House. "With a Roman courage and resolution" they had, it was announced, "resolved to add £300,000 to their stock, whereof £200,000 is already paid in." The subscription was a noteworthy effort which had its effect on home opinion, but in India the times were far too much out of joint to be influenced by any mere show of financial strength. Even before the Court's despatch reached its destination another serious crisis had arisen which had extinguished for the time being the Company's trade at Surat and threatened to involve all its Indian interests in disaster.

CHAPTER VIII

Annesley in Chains

Piracy in Indian Seas—European freebooters—The English in Surat accused of being in league with the pirates—Depredations of Captain Evory or Avory—Seizure of Abdul Guffore's ship worth Rs. 3,25,000—Popular indignation—A guard placed over the English factory—The mob demand the execution of Annesley and his colleagues—The Governor refers the matter to Court—Evory captures the *Gunjsawaee*, an Imperial pilgrim ship—An act of sacrilege—Renewed agitation against the English—The Governor causes all the English in Surat to be driven into the factory and orders irons to be placed on Annesley and the other leading men—The Governor's action saves the prisoners from a worse fate—Fury of the mob—The Governor denounced as an unbeliever—Annesley's defence of the English against the charges of abetting piracy—The Governor's reply—Sir John Gayer's indignation at the treatment of the English—He offers to provide a convoy for the Mogul ships.

AN immediate outcome of the demoralisation caused in the Indian trade at the end of the seventeenth century by the rivalries of the European Powers and the conflict between the East India Company and the interloping enterprises was a great development of piracy conducted by wes-

tern adventurers. Piracy of a kind had been rife from time immemorial in the Indian seas. In turn the hardy Malabars, ancestors of the lascars who man our eastern passenger steamers, and the stalwart Arabs from the Persian Gulf, had ravaged the western coast of India and taken a heavy toll of its seaborne trade. Only a few years before the cession of Bombay to the English a powerful Arab force had descended upon the island and swept it bare in spite of the still relatively formidable power of the Portuguese.

The conditions of anarchy then prevailing in India lent a stimulus to the sea roving which in the absence of a strong over-ruling naval power had never probably been entirely absent in any period of Indian history. Both the great contending forces on land, as we have already seen, were set off at sea by rival fleets manned almost exclusively by men whose sole occupation in peaceful times was piracy. They were for the most part a virile, picturesque race of seafarers, brave according to their lights, and formidable in their complete mastery of an elusive sea strategy based on a coastline providing innumerable bays and creeks to shelter their craft in when hard pressed and a rocky, mountainous background in which to establish their almost impregnable strongholds. For generations these Western Indian pirates held their own in spite of the efforts made to extirpate them. It was, in fact, not until almost modern times that

they were completely subdued by the irresistible force of British sea power.

The European pirates in Indian seas were adventurers of various races brought into association by a common lust for plunder. Many were deserters from the ships of the European trading companies—English, Dutch and French; a certain proportion of them were ordinary seamen recruited in irregular fashion at distant ports—notably in North America. They represented in the mass the flotsam and jetsam of the European sea community in a period of exceptional unrest when the ordinary restraints of the law had been loosened by the Revolution in England and the subsequent war with France. The thin line which divided privateering and piracy was then readily obliterated, and it was not difficult to equip and man vessels whose ultimate purpose was indiscriminate plunder.

The eastern seas were at the period a favourite cruising ground of the rovers for two reasons: the scene of operations being a distant one, the pirates were fairly secure from the interference of European Governments whose warships alone were able to cope successfully with their own well-armed ships; the Indian trading vessels often carried highly valuable freights and were an easy prey even when armed, as the crews had a wholesome fear of European seamen, and, if they fought at all, did so in feeble fashion.

European piracy in the Indian Ocean first came

into prominence as a factor in the lives of the servants of the East India Company in Western India in or about the year 1684. From that time onwards, year by year, charges of complicity with the pirates were brought by the Mogul officials against the English at Surat. The imprisonment of Annesley and his colleagues in 1689 was directly associated with one of these false accusations, and that the persecution was not abandoned with the release of the prisoners is manifest from the numerous allusions in the records to the damage which the Company's interests sustained from these repeated calumnies. Thus the Surat Council early in 1693 mentioned that owing to the slanderous association of the English with pirates, neither Mr Annesley nor Mr. Vaux could stir out without a guard.

"Was it not on account of the piracys," proceeded the official narrative, "we should live here in as great, or greater honour, credit and respect than ever, to the promoting thereof we do find all our endeavours checkt exceedingly by these our enemies endeavouring all they can, both at Court and here with the Government, to make us and these villains equall under the generall name of the English nation; but," went on the writer, who from the tone of the communication we may safely assume was Annesley, "if it please God to strengthen us that any of these rogues do fall into our clutches, we shall certainly make them publick ex-

amples to the whole world for the justification of our nation's honour and your Honours', altho' the dearest relations we have in the world should be amongst them." The Surat factors would not have written with such bitterness of soul if their position in relation to the European sea rovers had not already become an embarrassing one. But bad as affairs were in these earlier years, they were destined to become a good deal worse after the letter from which the foregoing extract is quoted was written.

It was in the last half-dozen years of the seventeenth century that European piracy in the Indian Ocean attained its most formidable character. The notorious head of the rovers who then preyed upon the Indian trade was a certain Captain Evory or Avory, an Englishman who apparently had previously been engaged in the American trade. Evory in or about the year 1694 fitted out in the West Indies a ship called the *Fancy*, mounting forty-six guns, and manned by a crew of one hundred and thirty, composed of several nationalities, the number including fifty-six French, and a good many English, Scotch and Irish, and a sprinkling of Danes and other seafaring people. Sailing for the East, Evory made for the island of Perim, the situation of which at the entrance of the Red Sea suggested its adoption as a convenient base for operations against the rich native trade which was then conducted between Surat and Mocha.

The pirate commander quickly discovered, what an expedition from India found a century later, that the island was untenable because of the total absence of drinking-water. He then made for Madagascar, and at St. Mary's on that island created a post at which he could refit and refresh his crew after their cruises in the Indian Ocean. When these arrangements were completed he commenced a career of crime which made him the terror of the Indian seamen. His first victim was a fine ship owned by Abdul Guffore, which was on its return voyage from the Red Sea with a cargo said to have been worth Rs. 3,25,000. Evory rifled the ship of its valuable contents and carried off as captive a young Mohammedan lady of good family who was proceeding to her home after performing the pilgrimage to Mecca. This done, he retired to his base at St. Mary's, leaving the pillaged ship to continue her voyage without further molestation.

Popular feeling rose to fever heat when the bedraggled victims of the pirate's violence reached Surat. The avenging finger of Abdul Guffore was pointed towards Annesley and his colleagues as the real authors of the crime. It only needed this suggestion to arouse the populace to a state of fury. A tumultuous concourse gathered, excited as only an Oriental mob can be when its feelings are deeply stirred by tales of violence to its womankind. The highly charged atmosphere speedily penetrated to the factory, where the news which had

filtered through of Evory's achievements had prepared its inmates for a popular uprising. Annesley, taking in the situation with the insight of an old campaigner in Oriental fields, promptly caused the gates of the establishment to be closed. He knew the capabilities of the place for defence, and had no misgivings as to the outcome of a fight between the well-armed inmates and the miscellaneous crowd of ruffians which the bazaars of Surat were able to furnish in times of disorder.

But he had reckoned without the official forces which were soon brought into action when the Governor became aware of the dangerous ferment in the town. Before many hours had elapsed the Military Commander, Ushoor Beg, with a troop of horse clattering at his heels, rode into the space in front of the factory and demanded admission on the plea that he had an important message from the Governor. Unsuspectingly the Englishmen allowed him and his men to enter, and when resistance was useless they discovered to their chagrin that they were virtually prisoners. Ushoor Beg was polite and pretended that he was sent to protect the factory, but beneath his suave assurances Annesley detected a design on the part of the authorities to act as a good deal more than the Englishmen's friendly guardians. Not, however, that the exiles were so secure as to be able to dispense with protection. They were, in fact, in the greatest peril, owing to the firm hold that the legend

of English complicity in the piracies had obtained of the populace.

As an attack on the factory was out of the question, held as it was by Ushoor Beg's men, the agitators decided to make a formal appeal to the Governor for the punishment of the Englishmen. The same night, acting on their behalf, the Harcoora, the Mufti[1] and a number of other prominent men in the town repaired to the palace to voice the popular wish. The actual demand preferred was for the execution of Annesley and his leading colleagues. The Mufti waxed eloquent about the heinousness of the crime of which the Englishmen were guilty and supported his bloodthirsty pleas by quoting passages from the Koran. The Governor knew very well that Annesley and his fellows were no pirates and flatly declined to take any violent action. The most that he would promise was that he would submit the facts to Aurungzebe and invite his decision. Baffled of their prey, the deputation retired in anger. But they had not long to wait before a new and more startling act of piracy had supplied them with a further and more damning count in their indictment of the English.

Evory, cruising about in search of fresh prey after his attack on Abdul Guffore's ship, fell in with the *Gunjsawaee*, one of a small fleet of ships kept in commission by the Emperor for the use of

[1] An expounder of the Mohammedan law, the utterer of the fatwa.—HOBSON JOBSON.

the faithful in the course of their pilgrimage to Mecca. It was supposed to be consecrated exclusively to this traffic and in a sense was a holy vessel. But the pirate commander recognised no distinctions in the victims of his depredations. It was sufficient for him to know that a ship was worth plundering, and as the *Gunjsawaee*, in spite of its sacrosanct character, carried a rich cargo, he dealt with it on strict business principles. After a feeble resistance the Nakoodah, or captain, surrendered his charge, which was afterwards carried off to the pirates' lair in Madagascar, where the cargo was disposed of.

This capture of the Imperial pilgrim ship in Mohammedan eyes was more than a crime: it was sacrilege. It served to fan to the fiercest heat the fires of fanaticism which already burned violently in Surat against the little community in the English factory. The Governor now saw that popular feeling must be conciliated by energetic action. His first step was to sweep into the common prison that the factory had now become every Englishman that his soldiers could lay their hands upon. Vaux was thus imprisoned, though his connection with the Company had been severed, and he was, in fact, in bitter antagonism to it. A companion in misfortune was another ex-Company man named Uphill, who, like Vaux, had gone into the interlopers' camp. A more notable addition to the list of the unfortunates was a party of seamen,

including the captain from the Company's ship *Benjamin*, then at Swally. These men had been seized while ashore and carried off under the eyes of those on board without their being able to render them any assistance. When the tale of prisoners was complete, it was found that some fifty Englishmen had been brought under the factory roof. By the Governor's orders they were all heavily ironed and a guard of between two and three hundred men was placed over them to ensure that they were absolutely cut off from communication with the outside world.

These violent measures, though extremely humiliating to the national pride of the prisoners, probably saved them from a worse fate. "We must confess," wrote Annesley to Gayer, "our Guard was no more than necessary to defend us from the rabble, for the whole Mobile was raised against us, demanding satisfaction of us even to our lives. The Governor was very much in danger in contradicting the stream of their madness; and they once or twice entered into furious resolutions of assaulting his house, not sticking to say publickly he had a part of the plunder. He told 'em wee were already in irons and he would write up to the King what further to do with us . . . till which he could do no more. The 16th, which was Council day, the rabble had all banded together to complain, bringing those that were wounded and maimed and women that had been abused on the *Gunsway* and

Abdull Guffore's ships open mouthed to complain and lay it up on us, some to say they were robb'd of so much money, some that they had lost relations, &c.

"The Governor, seeing what would be the event of popular fury, refused to have a Council and made his soldiers give the Mobile an answer that he had referred all to the King and given everything out of his power, upon which, they forced 'em away, and Kisso Parrack told us the Harcoora had sent to him to leave us in time, for there was such writings gone up to the King as would certainly ruin us. The 20th last month the Governor sat in Council, and there was an uproar made by the rabble that he was forced to rise up and go into his house whilst his peons turned and beat them out. They had the conscience to demand to have us brought before the Council and either be killed or have some corporall punishment inflicted on us, which the Governor said he could not do, and turning to the Cozze [1] asked him if it were the Mohammedan law to do so, who announced it could not be till full evidence was given in 'twas us. Upon which a Patan, with his sword in one hand and a Guitaree [2]

[1] *Kazi.* A judge.

[2] *Katar.* A dagger with a broad straight blade, the hilt of which comes up on either side of the wrist, and which is grasped by a cross-bar in the centre; a dagger, poinard, stilletto, dirk. *Katari.* A small dagger, a dirk, a stilletto.—*A Dictionary of Urdû, Classical Hindi and English,* by John T. Platts, M.A.

in the other, would have placed himself near the Governor, but his soldiers beat him from thence and turned him out with the rest of his associates. We have seldom less than 200 men in and about the factory by the Governor's particular orders." Annesley added that even Ushoor Beg could not stir abroad for fear of insolence and affronts, so violent was the popular feeling. "It is needless to write your Excellency," he concluded, "the indignitys, slavish usages and tyrannical insultings wee hourly bear day and night, and to expatiate on so hatefil a subject would no wayes redress or alleviate our sufferings."

A spirited protest was made to the Governor by Annesley against the ill-treatment to which he and his countrymen were subjected on the flimsy pretence that they were responsible for the outrage that had been committed. "There were," he pointed out, "a great many thieves on the sea. We never engaged to clear it of 'em. If the servants of the Right Honourable Company had done pyracy we would for one rupee pay two. . . . If, as they say, the *Gunjsawaee* was plundered by people from Bombay, the place is not so far off but he might soon send whom he pleased thither to satisfy himself therein." To this the Governor replied, according to the record which Annesley penned of the transactions, "The ship was affirmed to be plundered near Bombay, and severall are ready to swear those that did it were known by them for-

merly to be in actual service on the island. The Nocquedah (captain) says so publicly." Annesley promptly repudiated the allegation that the pirates were drawn from the Company's service. "For nine years past," he wrote, "have been the same false aspersions on us, and all along wee have at last appeared merchants and not pyrates. If wee were the latter, would wee live amongst them and bring so many 100,000 rupees' worth of goods to the City? He might consider how unreasonable and ridiculous it would be to expect anything of the nature from persons meriting such a character. Were wee pyrates, would wee rob under our own colours and tell everybody who wee were? No, rather if wee had plundered the ship wee should have sunk her, that 100 years after none should have known what had become of her. Wee have declared, if it can be proved on us, wee will give two for one, and do the same now again; but if it be false, then those that so wrongfully accuse us to our prejudice must make us a full satisfaction of that damage. Is their King answerable for any of his runagate subjects that may do mischief abroad? No more is our prince or we for those of his that have shook subjection to the laws and pyrate it up and down. If any of the Right Honourable Company's subjects have done it, its another matter. Our Generall should be informed of the dishonour and tyranny unreasonably laid upon us, and wee hoped a just remedy would be found."

To this the Governor vouchsafed no reply, but that Annesley's shrewd arguments were not without their effect was shown by the circumstance that the Mogul authority so far relaxed the strict regulations the Englishmen were living under to permit them to write to Bombay in English and Portuguese setting forth the facts of their imprisonment.

At a somewhat later date Annesley again addressed the Governor, pointing out to him the serious financial loss involved in the stoppage of the trade of the port. This communication the Governor "answered with more anger than reason," observing that "he would have it considered that the Servants of God in this affair had lost 200,000 rupees, by which many of them were turned fuckeers,[1] and that for the five last years the pyrates had taken our name, and this year that the *Gunsway* was robbed, the Nocqueda positively affirmed it was by our people between Bombay and Bassein." As they could not clear themselves of this they ought to find some expedient "to wipe off this aspersion and make our busyness go on."

The Governor's attitude, all things considered, was not an unreasonable one. Though Annesley was probably ignorant on the subject, it was an un-

[1] *Fakeer*. Properly an indigent person, but specially "one poor in the sight of God"; applied to a Mohammedan religious mendicant and then loosely and inaccurately to Hindoo devotees.—HOBSON JOBSON.

doubted fact that a number of Evory's men were Englishmen who had once been in the service of the East India Company. Most of them were deserters who had thrown off their allegiance at the time of Keigwin's mutiny or subsequently in the disorders created by the Sidhi's invasion. They were double-dyed ruffians who stopped at no villainy, and the Company's service was the stronger by their absence. But their outlaw character only served to give additional force to the Mogul contention that the piracy was a matter for which the Company could justly be held responsible. The Governor had the greater reason for holding the English to ransom, in that he himself was becoming an object of suspicion to the mob. "The strange violence and impetuousness of the rabble," Annesley wrote, "continues still in that manner that none dare appear for us, though they know us innocent. There being a strong combination amongst them to the contrary, he would be esteemed the common enemy that should oppose it and stand up on the behalf of unbelievers against the true Mussulman. All castes and sorts of people declare themselves willing to be our executioners would the Governor surrender us up, and the Mohammedans stick not to call him Caufur (Kaffir—unbeliever) and say the towne is so defiled that no prayer can be offered up acceptable to God till justice is done."

Sir John Gayer was highly indignant when he learned from Annesley's letter "the tidings of the

unparalleled indignitys" to which the English at Surat had been subjected. His feelings overflowed in a letter he indited to the Surat Council at the end of September. "How often have we been falsely charged," he wrote. "Nay, how often hath it been proved so, and yett upon every fresh alarm of a pyrate on the coast all is still laid upon the English, and the Company's Chief and Council, and gentlemen of quality, must like the meanest and basest criminals be clapt up in irons, chained together like a company of doggs to secure their lives being made a sacrifice to the rabble. Hath it not bin sufficiently proved that that rogue that did so much mischief for two years together (all which was falsely charged on the English) was done by people of another nation and not the English, much less the Company's servants, . . . and we further say, suppose it should be proved there is English pyrates in the seas as well as other nations, is the English East India Company to be charged with their crimes? How unreasonable a thing would that be. Has not the great King of Industan many pyrates on his own coast of his owne subjects that robbs and plunders the vessels of his own as well as the subjects of others, notwithstanding all the care he takes to prevent it? And we cannot but further add that its almost miraculous that none of our nation have not turned pyrates in this country, seeing its so common for the Right Honourable Company's servants (which should all

be subject to the Company's representatives here), when they have committed never so great enormity against the Company, presently fly to the protection of the Government of the country whereby they are secured from justice and the Company extreamly injured, as might be made appear by many proofs of this nature. . . . Again, we say can it be imagined, if wee were guilty of such horrible crimes as is laid to our charge by vile and unreasonable men as to robb the King's ships and bring their money so robbed to Bombay, that wee should at the same time send a ship of so considerable a cargo to be landed at the King's port and supply his subjects with so large a quantity of guns? Besides all this wee are willing to stand the test against all that can prove anything of this kind against us that live round about where wee are. Wherefore, being so innocent of what wee are accused, wee cannot but desire of the Governor that justice may be done them that so falsely accuse us, and so injuriously affront the King and his subjects to the extream reproach of our persons and vast loss by the hinderance of our trade."

Notwithstanding all that they had suffered from "the naughtiness of some ill-minded men," and in order that they might to the utmost vindicate their innocence and show their zeal to the great King of Hindustan, Gayer stated that so soon as the captain and men of the *Benjamin* were released they were prepared to send that ship and another

to cruise down the coast as far as Anjengo for the pirates. They further promised that if their ships arrived according to expectation they would send a ship or two to act as convoy of the Mocha and Jeddah fleets, provided the Governor would undertake that they should have such freights as would defray the charges of the voyage.

CHAPTER IX

The Emperor Aurungzebe and the Pirates

Aurungzebe's anger at the piracies—Asad Khan, the Prime Minister, turns his wrath from the English—The Sidhi gives the English a certificate of character—The Emperor decides to make the Dutch and the French jointly responsible with the English for the pirates—Annesley's warning to the directors as to the consequences of piracy—The Imperial decree arrives in Surat—Position of the captives in the English factory—Plot against Annesley's life by some of his fellow-prisoners—Vaux implicated—Disaffection amongst the sailor captives—Captain Alexander Hamilton interrogated by Annesley—His contemptuous conduct—Removal of the guards from the factory—Vaux's violent denunciation of Annesley and of the Company.

THE narrative now takes us to the Imperial Camp, where Aurungzebe was living in the barbaric state which characterised his peregrinating Court. He was well advanced in years—"old and crazy," as Annesley about this time described him. Nevertheless, his rule was a real one, and we read of him as an active participant in all the concerns of

his immense Empire down even to minute details.[1] Pious according to his lights, he took a profound interest in religious questions and regularly corresponded with Holy Priests of the Faith in different parts of his dominions. To such a monarch, fanatical and arrogant, the audacious crimes of Evory were calculated to be as a spark introduced into a barrel of gunpowder.

When the tale of infamy, which lost nothing in its telling in the hands of the Harcoora, reached Aurungzebe he gave way to the most violent paroxysm of rage, denouncing the English as infidels, and swearing by the Prophet's beard that they should pay dearly for their sacrilegious acts. As a practical step of retributory justice he issued orders that the Sidhi should be instructed to invade Bombay, that a great army should be sent to attack Fort St. George, and that the Company's officials and goods should be seized in all parts of his dominions. Finally, the Emperor sternly ordered that the

[1] "When Emperor he (Aurungzebe) not only sat every day himself to administer justice, but was attended by those who were the most distinguished for their knowledge of the laws; men of learning made up reports of the cases, but the Emperor himself examined them before he pronounced judgment; that he might diffuse the administration of justice over the whole Empire he had an officer in the principal courts of the provinces; and whenever he received any complaint respecting the conduct of a judge, he brought the accused before him, put the accusation in his hands, and if he found him guilty degraded and banished him."—*Bruce's Annals*, Vol. 2, p. 72.

English should be placed under a perpetual ban of banishment if they did not "find an expedient for the secure navigation of his ships." A circumstance which gave a keener edge to the Imperial feelings of exasperation at this juncture was the action of the Company in coining rupees bearing Persian characters. In this act Aurungzebe saw a menace to his own prerogatives, a sort of *lèse-majesté* with the added turpitude which belongs to a deliberately insulting form of crime. Never before in his reign, in fact, had the Emperor been so incensed against the English.

Fortunately for the English interest it had at this period a powerful friend at Court in the Prime Minister, Asad Khan. This worthy was too well informed to believe that the English Company had any real part in the piracies. He knew, further, that the renewal of the warfare against them would probably be a very onerous business, and that in any event it would react disastrously on the Imperial revenue. Mingled with his solicitude for the State interests was no doubt a lively sense of the adverse effect that the expulsion of the English would have on his own finances. Corruption was the breath of the Mogul official's life, and whatever the shortcomings of the English, they were handsome bribers. Asad Khan, therefore, found no difficulty, when Aurungzebe's rage had abated, in representing to him that there might be another side to the question—that these unclean

infidels might not be so black as they were painted by the Harcoora's pen, and that in any event if driven away they would have it in their power to injure very seriously the trade and revenue of the Imperial Dominions.

In order that the representations might lose nothing in weight the wily Vizier took care that they should be reinforced by a letter from the Sidhi testifying to the innocence of the English of the crimes imputed to them. "O King of Kings," wrote the Mogul Admiral, "the English are great merchants and drive a vast trade in your country. 'Tis well, for in these days Sir John Gayer, Generall for the English that lives in Bombay, does very good service to the subjects of your Majesty and that in every respect. There are a great many hat men (European) thieves in these seas, but such busyness is not from the English cast, nor ever will be." This certificate of character clinched the matter. Aurungzebe withdrew his orders and fell to discussing with his Minister alternatives to the strong measures he had just favoured. Asad Khan dexterously led his master's mind to the contemplation of the issue of a general edict which would make all the European nations trading in India jointly and severally responsible for the safety of the Mogul ships. Aurungzebe, who with all his fanaticism was not deficient of common sense, perceived the substantial advantages as well as the justice of this proposal and raised no diffi-

culty to the signing of a decree calling upon the Dutch and the French as well as the English to supply ships for the protection of trade and to provide compensation for the *Gunjsawaee*.

While Asad Khan's friendly measures were maturing, the English at Surat were awaiting with deep anxiety the course of events. They had sufficient knowledge as to the trend of opinion at the Imperial Court to entertain no fear for their lives, but they dreaded the prospect of an indefinite extension of their imprisonment with all its hardships and humiliations.

"Our personal disgrace, loss and troubles in the shamefull, unjust imprisonment," Annesley wrote at the end of October, "is nothing so afflictive as the publick dishonour of our King and country by barbarous infidels who have violated the public faith given us by the Governor's hospitality and protection due to strangers. If a severe resentment follows not such practises, it will be a leading card upon every slight occasion to the Persians, Mallabars, Arabians, &c., to serve our countrymen in the same manner. A good Vakeel at Court and some raritys to Asset Cawn (who was so lately obliged to be our friend by a present of 30,000 rupees) with a few Persian horses every Dually or New Year's Day to the King would have such an awe on the severall Governors where the Right Honourable Company's busyness is that they dare not abuse or trample on us in this manner like a

parcel of poor abject slaves." Annesley expressed the hope that the Emperor would accept the proposal of a convoy for the Mocha and Jeddah ships, and would grant to the Company the Sidhi's pay, which was Rs. 4,00,000 per annum. If this happened, Annesley went on to say, Sir John Gayer might be the first Fouzdar[1] "to secure the navigation of the Emperor's subjects from piracy, and as his land fouzdars are responsible on account of their salaries to make good robberys on the roads, you to satisfy all such losses on the salt water." As for an exclusive *farman*, the Governor assured them that he could easily procure it. "These great and noble benefits," Annesley concluded, "will sufficiently attone for our present disgrace and loss and set the English nation for ever out of danger of such abuses again."

The high hopes of a satisfactory settlement to which the communication gives expression in its first sentences were doomed to disappointment. By the end of November there had been a distinct change for the worse in the captives' prospects, and we have Annesley moralising in this strain in his reports to Gayer: "Had wee to do with men less unreasonable Your Excellency's compliance (on the subject of the convoy) had not met with so

[1] *Foujdar, Phousdar.* Properly a military commander. But in India an officer of the Mogul Government who was invested with the charge of the police and jurisdiction in criminal matters.—HOBSON JOBSON.

dilatory or rather no returns; nor should ever the meanest of the English nation have found so barbarous treatment as wee have done; but when there is no respect to hospitality due to strangers, nor vows and promises of protection given them, what can be looked for except outrage and unlimited arbitrary proceedings?"

In the closing days of the year, the long-awaited decree arrived from the Imperial Court. It took the anticipated form of a direction to the Governor that all three European nations having factories in Surat should send ships to search for and bring in the pirates or pay the damages sustained by the loss of the *Gunjsawaee*. The comprehensiveness of the edict caused consternation in French and Dutch quarters, where hitherto the indignities heaped upon the English had excited but a detached and somewhat malicious interest. To the Dutch especially the Mogul's orders were of serious import, since they meant the complete derangement of their numerous shipping involving, it was estimated, a loss of a million rupees.

Resistance, however, was not practicable in the circumstances in which the factories stood to each other, and with a wry face the obligation to furnish a convoy—which the edict really amounted to—was entered into, the English Company's bond being sent in to the Governor by Annesley on January 6, 1696. By this time Annesley had become convinced of the friendliness of the Mogul

official. He writes of him almost with enthusiasm, and refers to the suspicion he had brought himself under with his Imperial master by the resolute resistance he had offered to the mob's demands—"the King intimating folly or bribery the reason of espousing their cause." But Annesley makes it clear that the Governor acted impartially, and that "nothing but his wonted integrity and justice made him patronise an injured cause."

The captives naturally supposed that with the giving of the bonds their release had become imminent. They had, however, reckoned without the infinite capacity of Mogul officialdom for circumlocution—a cold, calculating circumlocution which tantalised its victims while it rifled their pockets. Week after week went by, the cold season merged into the torrid heat of a Guzerat summer, without any sign being vouchsafed of the opening of the port and the release of the prisoners. Meanwhile grave trouble had arisen in the ranks of the captive community. Misfortune had brought together strange bedfellows and there were continual dissensions. Though the prisoners were under strict surveillance, the forms of the Company's rule in the factory were maintained. Annesley thus was still as much as ever "the Chief," and on all questions of internal discipline his word was law.

Vaux from the first set himself to flout and undermine Annesley's authority. He chafed

under the restraint imposed upon him, which he believed to be due to the intrigues of his old colleagues, who wanted to curry favour with their employers by keeping him where he would give them no cause for anxiety. We catch in Annesley's diary some lively glimpses of the struggle that went on between the two men in which the dour, dogged resolution of the writer was pitted against the cool insolence of Vaux.

The feud ultimately assumed, if Annesley is to be believed, the character of a conspiracy in which Vaux deliberately plotted to take the President's life. According to the evidence which was collected for the information of the Bombay Council, the design was to stab Annesley to death, and for Vaux and the members of the *Benjamin's* crew, whose assistance he had enlisted, to make a bold dash for freedom. It seems probable that the whole affair was merely the outcome of a drunken orgy in which wild threats were uttered by some of the seamen who thought that their release might have been secured if the members of the Council had opened their purse strings to the official harpies who were hovering expectantly around. The Harcoora had openly stated that he would obtain the desired order for a consideration of Rs. 10,000, and the humbler captives had quite convinced themselves that only a niggardly thriftiness on the part of the Council was prolonging their sufferings.

Annesley, however, took the threats very seriously and sent the Secretary to Vaux to demand the names of those involved in the conspiracy. "Vaux replied that he was not obliged to tell him and never would, for the President had written home to his disparagement, and his letter had come into the hands of Sir Josiah Child. This not being pertinent to the message that the Secretary was sent on, he demanded an answer. Vaux said his answer was that if the Honourable President and Council wrote to him he would give them a tickling answer (as his expression was)." As nothing could be got out of Vaux, Ephraim Bendall, a member of Council, interrogated Uphill as to some statements he had made bearing on the conspiracy. Uphill, however, excused himself from answering, stating that when he used the language attributed to him he was "fudled."

The unmasking of the plot left the relations of the principal parties more strained than ever. Vaux did not even trouble to conceal his hatred and contempt of Annesley from the general view of the little community in the factory. A few days after the Secretary's abortive mission Annesley's protection was invoked by one of the Mogul soldiers who had been threatened with violence by Vaux. A messenger was sent by the President to ask Vaux "why he abused the King's soldiers." In a great passion Vaux demanded to know why he was detained. "He was not one of the Right

Honourable Company's servants, had eat none of their bread and salt for some time, and bid the messenger go tell the President he was a rogue, a knave and a dog." Annesley had received authority from Ushoor Beg to take disciplinary measures against any inmate of the factory who was disorderly, and it would have been quite within his power to have had Vaux put in irons for his insolence. But the shrewd factor thought it best—"in view of our unhappy circumstances—to pass it over for the present." He doubtless remembered that in the East the judge to-day may be the prisoner to-morrow.

Annesley's absorbing cares, due to conditions within the factory, had their counterpart in the tortuous negotiations which were still proceeding with the authorities relative to the settlement. Every day some new difficulty was raised to interpose an obstacle to the reopening of the port. It was, no doubt, all a matter of hard cash. "All these men have their price," might Annesley with equal bitterness and greater truth than Walpole have exclaimed as he surveyed the hungry crew of office-holders who clamoured about him. The Harcoora had received Rs. 2,000 without any good resulting, and Annesley was not inclined to entertain his extortionate demand for a further Rs. 10,000. At the same time he and his Council thought it well to bargain with him, "otherwise wee know they will put some rub in our way."

states the entry in the diary. At length, after much chaffering, the Harcoora's interest was bought for Rs. 2,000. But this concession only served to stimulate the voracity of other officials who considered that they were equally entitled to share the spoil. Prominent in the ranks of the claimants for *backsheesh* was Ushoor Beg the Commander. This worthy, to extort money, made himself very unpleasant over a permit which Annesley had obtained indirectly from the Governor to remove from a lower to an upper apartment owing to illness. The Military Commander affected to resent the interference with his authority and caused the order to be revoked, persisting in his oppressive conduct—for Annesley was really ill—until a large sum had been paid by way of blackmail.

The hot days of an Indian summer dragged slowly on amid continual bickerings amongst the prisoners, varied by occasional controversies with overbearing officials intent on plunder. Annesley's main preoccupation at the time was the prevention of an open mutiny amongst the seafaring prisoners, who included besides the *Benjamin's* crew Captain Alexander Hamilton, the Scotch interloping captain previously referred to. In these extracts from Annesley's diary we get a vivid impression of the troubled life which was led in the factory in this time of captivity:

"Having been informed by several persons that the Englishmen in ye factory designed to break

through ye guards, and having reason from several disorders to believe it was true, wee concluded to send for and examine the chief persons among them, and accordingly sent for Alexander Hamilton, of whom the President first demanded why he absented from prayers and table. He said he always eat with Mr. Vaux. The President asked him, Why so ? and whether the President had forbid him the Right Honourable Company's table ? He said, No, but he had done worse. He had brought six months' imprisonment on him by hindering him from employment. The President asked him Why he went not down to Bombay ? He said he had no business there. If the Generall or President would show him the King's order for it he would go thither. He had suffered enough there already and would do so no more. He used several rude expressions, upon which the President bid him retire, which he did.

"Wee sent for Captain Richard Lavender, who after some discourse told us that Captain Hamilton, the 7th March, drew up a paper to ye President to be signed by the English seamen, the purport whereof was that they understood wee had hindered their liberty by not performing our contract with the Moors concerning convoys to Mocha, and that they would regain the English honour and their liberty tho' with the hazard of their lives. This paper, he said, was brought to him by Captain Hamilton, but (as he says) he refused to sign it. He also

told us we were blamed for not standing out against the Moors at first. The President told him wee were prisoners before wee knew of the *Gunsway's* being plundered, and wee had no ammunition nor provisions."

Either by persuasion or threats Annesley contrived to keep his unruly associates in some semblance of order. His efforts were reinforced by Gayer, who wrote very strongly on the subject of the threatened rising. The Bombay Governor asserted that no stone had been left unturned to procure the prisoners' enlargement and promised that these efforts should be continued. Violence on their part at this stage, he pointed out, would lead to the effusion of much blood and it might be to severer measures against the Company's officials, "as well as a fresh imbroiling of their affairs and the endangering the trade of India to our nation." Therefore, he desired and commanded that they should desist from all violent and unwarrantable practices on pain of severe punishment afterwards. The letter had the effect of restraining the more moderate section of the mutineers, but the spirit of demoralisation existing in the factory was not to be exorcised by any threats of an authority seated more than a hundred miles away. This is clear from those entries in the diary which follow immediately upon the record of the discussion in Council upon Sir John Gayer's letter:

"May 23. This day the seamen of the *Benjamin*,

getting drunk at ye funeral of Mr. Wm. Morrice (by the indiscretion of the steward in giving them too much liquor), get to blows with some of ye freemen and made a great disturbance, but at length were quelled.

"The President ordered ye allowance of Arrack that used to be daily distributed among the seamen to be stopt, and with much ado persuaded Uskeorbeg not to shackle them. They are very rude and unruly, and like wretches threaten to turn Moors upon the President's reprehending them, so we are forced to let them alone and bear with their impudence in ye best manner wee can."

Happily for Annesley his troublesome guardianship of the dissolute "wretches" was now nearing its termination. After sundry false alarms, the welcome tidings of the arrival at Surat of the Court's orders for the reopening of the port reached the factory on June 27, and the same day the Governor caused the irons to be removed from the prisoners and the guard to be withdrawn.

The release from his long and harassing imprisonment was for Annesley only the prelude to a fresh set of worries. He was called upon immediately to face a very serious financial position. Debts had for a long time past been accumulating, and as soon as the news of the freeing of the Englishmen was circulated, creditors collected, clamouring for payment. On their own initiative the Company's brokers—Kisso and Vittul Parrack—paid

out Rs. 1,00,000 to the hungry company, "to stop their mouths," as they put it, an act of presumption that excited Annesley's keen indignation. Meanwhile, the embarrassed President was receiving "vile, scurrilous letters" almost daily from Hamilton and Vaux, threatening all sorts of pains and penalties for their imprisonment which they attributed, probably with good reason, to Annesley's influence. These miseries were only the forerunner of a regular campaign conducted with the object of securing revenge for their imprisonment and depressing the Company's credit. One of their manœuvres was to cite the Company's brokers before the local officials in respect of debts said to be due by them to Vaux and Uphill.

This action was directly contrary to the principle for which the Company had always firmly contended—that the native authority had no *locus standi* in matters of dispute between the Company and its servants, and Annesley wrote a strong letter to Vaux, pointing out the pernicious tendency of the course he was pursuing, inasmuch as it would show the Mogul officials how to undermine the ancient privileges of the English. Vaux made a characteristically violent reply, stating that the Company had robbed him in respect of a ship of his that they had seized, and declaring that he would not desist from the method that he had adopted to obtain his rights. Annesley retorted that he had expected to receive a civil answer and

that on his part he would not be deterred from maintaining the Company's privilege by Vaux's bluster. "To which," wrote Annesley, "he returned a most scurrilous answer, so we resolved to write him no more." It was easier to stop the correspondence than to close Vaux's mouth. The interloper, in company with Hamilton, went about Surat proclaiming that the Company were thieves who had not only filched from him, but, what was a much more heinous offence, had robbed "the Moors" to the extent of several lakhs of rupees. The natural effect of this propaganda was to keep alive in the native mind the suspicion that the English Company was leagued with the pirates and directly responsible for the evils of which most of the Surat traders had had only too painful experience.

CHAPTER X

Kidd the Pirate

Further acts of piracy—"That grand villain Sivers, commonly called Chivers"—Remarkable immunity of the pirates—Royal Proclamation against Evory and his associates—An expedition to extirpate the pirates decided upon—Captain William Kidd appointed to command it—His aristocratic backers—Kidd sails in the *Adventure*—Refits at New York and proceeds to the East—He turns pirate—Captures the *Queda Merchant*, a valuable Surat-owned ship—The crews of the Company's ships *Moco* and *Josiah* mutiny and join Kidd—Further depredations—The *Dorrill's* successful fight with a pirate—Kidd's later career—Trial and execution.

"IF there be not care taken to suppress pyrats in India, and to impower your servants there to punish them according to their deserts, without fear of being traduced for what they have done when they return to their native country, it's probable their throats will be all cut in a little time by malefactors and the natives of the country in revenge for their frequent losses, as well as your Honours' trade in India wholly lost." So wrote Sir John Gayer to the directors in the early days

of 1697. The months which had intervened between Annesley's release and the penning of this communication had been one long record of trial and strain owing to the ever-present menace which the piratical outrages constituted for him and his colleagues in the Surat factory. So far from there being any lessening of the activity of the pirates, owing to the measures of protection enforced by the Mogul authority, the seas had become more dangerous to peaceful traders than ever.

In 1696 a new aspirant for the dubious precedence in infamy in the Indian Ocean appeared on the scene in the person of—to use the designation given him by the then Deputy-Governor of Bombay—"that grand villain Sivers, commonly called Chivers." This ruffian and his associates ravaged the native shipping from the Persian Gulf to Cape Comorin on one side, and from the same point to the Red Sea on the other. A fine ship belonging to Abdul Guffore sailing in the Gulf was stopped and robbed of a large amount of money and valuable cargo. A little later news came in from Mocha that two ships belonging to the Company's brokers in Bombay had been taken off "the Babs,"—the Straits of Bab-el-Mandeb—with the result that "the little merchants" on the island were "almost broake." These vessels were captured by "two small pirates, one of 14 the other of 13 guns, in each about 150 men, almost

all English." According to the official narrative, which gives these facts, the pirates laid hands on all the money they could find, using the native crew very barbarously to extort information as to hidden specie. Meanwhile, another pirate ship was cruising along the Malabar Coast, carrying terror into the hearts of native traders by its brutal depredations. Confronted by such a catalogue of crime, involving the English name in a fashion neither to be denied nor extenuated, it is not surprising that Annesley trembled for his liberty and that Gayer raised a sharp note of warning as to the consequences which must follow to English trade if such practices were continued.

A remarkable feature of this European piracy in the Indian Ocean at the close of the seventeenth century was the almost complete impunity with which it was practised. It seemed to be nobody's business to suppress the movement. The Dutch left it severely alone; the English were irritated by it, but preferred not to adopt effective measures of repression; the French were easily tolerant. As for the Mogul authority, its power at sea was no match for the powerfully armed and heavily manned corsairs of the pirates, which as potential enemies were equal to almost any vessels then sailing the eastern seas. A reason for the policy of non-interference pursued by the English Company's commanders towards the pirates, is, no doubt, supplied by the sentences quoted above

from Gayer's letter, in which a plea is made for enlarged powers for dealing with the pest.

The right of the East India Company to exercise jurisdiction over English subjects outside its own settlement was, to say the least, doubtful, and the distinction between the interloper and the pirate was at times so difficult to draw in the absence of direct evidence of crime that the Company's agents were perhaps reluctant to take action in view of the legal consequences that might flow from excessive zeal. Furthermore, it is to be feared that some of the baser sort of the officials of the English factories were too closely interested in the pirates' enterprises to have any desire to interfere with them. They trafficked in the plundered cargoes, and there is one instance on record in which a man who had just previously been a factor on the Malabar Coast actually purchased a ship which the pirates had taken at sea.

The quite neighbourly relations which existed between the regulars and the irregulars in the Indian Ocean is curiously illustrated by a letter preserved amongst the Indian archives, in which Evory, writing to the commanders of the Company's ships, gave them a signal by which they might make themselves known to him at sea and so be able to escape his possibly unwelcome attentions. In this communication the pirate leader said that his men were "hungry, stout and resolute," but that they never had wronged, nor

ever would wrong, either English or Dutch. Furnished with such proof of benevolent neutrality towards them on the part of the pirates, the Company's commanders were possibly glad to turn a blind eye on the piracy, the suppression of which in any event was no part of their business.

It was not until the news of the imprisonment of Annesley and his colleagues at Surat reached England in the early part of 1696 that the authorities at India House awakened to the peril that the piracy carried for their trade in India. They then appealed to the Government to take vigorous action, representing the gravity of the crisis and suggesting the despatch of an expedition under official auspices for the destruction of the pirates' lair at St. Mary's, Madagascar. In response to this call the authorities caused to be issued a Royal Proclamation offering a reward of £500 for the capture of Evory, and threatening the utmost rigour of the law against all who were involved with him as associates in infamy. Evory, in the meantime, had abandoned his career and prudently realised his assets by the sale of his ship and cargo in the West Indies. He was never brought to justice, but a number of his crew having indiscreetly returned home early in 1697, were seized, put upon their trial and executed after the manner of pirates—"being hanged between high and low water at Execution Dock.[1]"

[1] Execution Dock, Wapping in the East, on the left bank

The larger question of direct measures for the suppression of piracy was not lost sight of by the authorities. Lack of funds, however, stood in the way of action. The Exchequer had been depleted by the heavy expenses of the war with France, and the Government, at their wits' end to provide money for the ordinary charges of administration, found it impossible to finance so costly an enterprise as an expedition for the destruction of the pirates' organisation would necessarily be. As a solution of the problem the Earl of Bellamont, who about this time was proceeding to New York as Governor, proposed to the Admiralty a scheme by which the expedition would be carried out under private auspices. The idea was that money should be provided by what in the commercial terminology of our day would be called a syndicate, and that with the funds thus obtained a ship should be equipped and manned and sent out as a privateer with letters of marque and a special commission under the Great Seal.

Viewed in the light of modern practices it was an extraordinary arrangement, but at the time it appears to have excited no misgiving and the necessary formalities were expeditiously carried

of the Thames, just below Wapping New Stairs, described by Stow as "the usual place of execution for hanging of pirates and sea rovers at the low-water mark, and there to remain till three tides had overflowed them."—*London, Past and Present.*

through. Associated with Lord Bellamont in the venture were four of the most distinguished men of the time—the Earl of Oxford, then First Lord of the Admiralty; Lord Somers, the Lord Chancellor; Lord Romney, Secretary of State, and Lord Shrewsbury, one of the Lords Justices. Another partner in the enterprise, and the most active promoter of it, was a certain Colonel Livingstone, a man of considerable social standing, whose opinions appear to have carried great weight with his fellow venturers.

For the purposes of the expedition a vessel named the *Adventure* was fitted out and furnished with an armament which was calculated to make it a formidable adversary of any ship that it was likely to encounter in Indian seas. The important question of the selection of a commander was practically settled by Colonel Livingstone, who put forward so strong a recommendation in favour of a certain Captain William Kidd that the other members of the combination accepted this nomination without demur. Kidd was represented as a bold, dashing fellow whose fine seamanlike qualities derived an added value from the fact that he was well acquainted with the pirates' base in Madagascar. If the eminent promoters had had the slightest knowledge of the conditions of sea life in the East, they would have distrusted Kidd's very special qualifications for the undertaking—qualifications which were hardly those of an honest

sailor. But the sea sense of the English had sadly degenerated since the days of Blake, and the Indian Ocean was a far cry to the statesmen of the Revolution, whose absorbing cares were mainly of the domestic order. So William Kidd, destined in due course to blossom into the most redoubtable pirate who ever besmirched the honour of England, was sped on his voyage with the good wishes of men of the highest eminence in the Government.

Sailing from Plymouth in May, 1696, the *Adventure*, a few weeks later, reached New York, where she received her complement of 155 men. When the arrangements for the voyage were completed, Kidd proceeded direct to St. Mary's, Madagascar, where he appears to have arrived about the end of the year. After spending some time in the vicinity of the pirates' well-fortified stronghold, the *Adventure* went to the entrance of the Red Sea, where it cruised for some time. Kidd's purpose here can only be divined: it may have been to search for pirates whose favourite haunt was about the Straits of Bab-el-Mandeb; it is more likely, in view of later events, that he was on the look-out for the Indian shipping passing to and from the Red Sea ports, with a view of plundering it. Whatever his purpose, he soon abandoned his cruising ground for a more agreeable one off the Malabar Coast.

Arriving outside Calicut in the early part of 1697, Kidd appeared in his true colours—these

were not the emblems of the traditional pirate, but the Cross of St. George used as a cover to an avowed policy of plunder. There has seldom been a more audacious and never a more mischievous misuse of official forms. Much after the fashion of Keigwin at Bombay, though without a grain of his patriotism, Kidd actually posed as the legionmate agent of the Crown. On any and every occasion he drew out in solemn form the King's Commission with the Great Seal of England attached, and almost persuaded his victims that they were being despoiled not to minister to the sordid gains of a ruffianly pirate, but in pursuance of a deliberate State policy.

Kidd's first prize was a barque owned by a Dutchman of Surat. While peacefully anchored in the roadstead at Calicut the vessel was pounced upon by the pirate, and after being rifled of special goods was despatched to Madagascar to be refitted for offensive purposes. On the second day in February, flying for much higher game, the pirate commander chased and captured the *Queda Merchant*, a large native ship of 400 tons burthen manned for the most part by natives, but with an Englishman named Wright as captain and a few other Europeans in subordinate positions. A rich cargo, estimated at the time to be worth Rs. 4,00,000, about £50,000 of modern money, fell as spoil to the thieves. It was yielded to them with the ship without a vestige of resistance, and the

fact subsequently tended in no small measure to strengthen the belief widely prevalent in Indian quarters that you had only to scratch the Englishman to find the pirate.

But probably less than justice was done to Wright by the popular suspicion of the time that he was in league with Kidd and a sharer in the spoils. Gayer, at all events, defended him warmly from the aspersion, and his view that the overwhelming character of the odds against Wright was quite sufficient to explain his conduct may be accepted as fairly conclusive on the subject. Nevertheless, it was most unfortunate that the English name should have been linked with the commanders of the pirate and the captured ships. The association had an immense influence in depressing the already low standard of esteem in which the English in Western India were held at this period.

Kidd's fame as a pirate quickly circulated throughout the East, and brought him many adherents from the more restless section of the English seamen class. His most notable recruits were the greater part of the crews of the East India Company's frigate, the *Mocho*, and a smaller ship, the *Josiah*. The *Mocho's* crew, during the vessel's voyage to China, rose in mutiny, murdered the captain, and turned the other officers with a few loyal members of the crew adrift in a small boat. The unfortunates were for a time in desperate

straits, but fortunately when off Acheen they fell in with the *Josiah*, and, though the crew of that ship had also mutinied, they took compassion on the party and put them in the way of getting a safe passage to Madras.

In a brief space, no doubt by pre-concerted arrangement, the *Mocho* and the *Josiah* joined forces with Kidd off the Malabar Coast. Other additions were made to the pirate's strength by the arming of prizes, and so eventually a regular pirate fleet came into being, armed and equipped as few forces in those waters, outside the squadrons of the Dutch and English Companies had been. Intent on the complete domination of the trade of the Indian Ocean, Kidd distributed his forces with the skill of a sea strategist. He himself in the *Adventure*, with several other ships acting as auxiliaries, cruised from Cape Comorin to Quilon, so that any ship bound to or from Bengal could with difficulty escape him. The *Mocho* frigate and another vessel plied between Acheen and the Straits of Malacca, and one or two other craft exercised a general oversight of the northern routes in the Indian Ocean. All told the pirate fleet mounted 120 guns, and was manned by not less than 300 Europeans, of whom the great majority were Englishmen. The organisation of the ships followed much on the lines of the vessels of the East India Company's fleet. There were the usual ratings and the larger craft at all events

carried a surgeon. Provisions were obtained from the shore and were almost invariably paid for at handsome rates. Munitions and stores not forthcoming from local sources were drawn from the base at Madagascar, which appears to have been a regular pirate arsenal and fortress combined. Altogether, a more formidable menace to peaceful shipping in the East could hardly have been created in that day.

Towards the end of 1697, Kidd put in at the Laccadive Islands and careened his ship. A vivid narrative of his stay there figures in the Bombay records, which tell us how the pirate gang "ravisht the women and murthered men, women and children." This diversion ended, Kidd took his vessel to Tellicherry, where he encountered the Company's ships *East India Merchant* and *Sceptre.* Finding their company uncongenial, he made off for Calicut, where he seized a small ship at anchor with the view of obtaining supplies. While Kidd was awaiting the return of the master, who had been coerced to proceed ashore for this purpose, the *East India Merchant* came upon the scene. The reappearance of the vessel on his tracks aroused the pirate's suspicion, and fearing that he might be cut off by the *Sceptre* he hoisted sail and stood to the southward. As his ship was passing the *East India Merchant,* those on the latter witnessed a scuffle in which Kidd fired a pistol at his quartermaster, who was practically

the chief mate of the pirate craft. It was merely a passing glimpse, but it spoke eloquently of the stern discipline maintained by Kidd over his ruffianly associates.

Shortly after this episode Kidd, when south of Anjengo on the same (Malabar) Coast, fell in with the *Loyal Captain*, another of the Company's ships. To prevent Kidd's "hungry crew" boarding his vessel, Captain How of the *Loyal Captain* visited the *Adventure*, "where he was pretty civilly treated and the King's Commission shown him, to which he showed due respect. Thereupon, "with several small piscashes[1] that he made and flattering discourses," Kidd, thinking that the visitor's cargo of sugar was not worth taking, was disposed to let him go; "but the ship's company, having received a false information from a Dutch *mustees*[2] on board the *Loyal Captain* that there was abundance of silver and diamonds in her, went to poleing, and the majority was for taking the ship." In the end, however, Kidd and his party prevailed, "and next morning Mr. How was dismissed, tho' not without menaces from many of the company."

The *Loyal Captain* was more fortunate than most of the vessels which had the misfortune to fall in with Kidd. The general practice of the

[1] Presents.

[2] *Mustees*. Persons of mixed blood, Spanish: Mestizo; half breed. Amer: Mestee or Mustee.

rovers was to make prizes of all trading ships worth taking and pack their crews into small boats to shift as best they might. Actual violence was rare because resistance was usually hopeless. There were occasions, however, when in spite of their formidable strength the pirates were baffled by the courageous determination of their intended victims. Amongst the Indian archives, for example, is a delightfully spirited account of how the commander of the good ship *Dorrill*, freighted from Bombay apparently by the East India Company's officials, beat off a ruffianly rover which was either one of Kidd's squadron or in close association with it. The narrative tells us how when passing through the Straits of Malacca on July 7, 1697, at five o'clock in the morning, the *Dorrill* fell in with a strange ship. Solomon Lloyd, the supercargo, had his suspicions of the vessel and immediately caused guns to be raised from the hold and mounted and ammunition brought up ready for emergencies. The narrative proceeds:—"Seeing if would could not gett from him, he far out sailing us, the Captain resolved to see what rogue would doe. Soe ordered to haul all our small sails and furled our mainsail. He, seeing this, did the like, and as drew near us beat a drum and sounded trumpetts and then hailed us 4 times before (we) answered him. At last it was thought fit to know what he would say. Soe ye boatswain spoke to him."

A long colloquy ensued, in which the name of the strange ship was given as the *Resolution*, and it was stated that she was commanded by a man named Collyped, who was identified by the captain of the *Dorrill* as a former gunner's mate in Bombay who some time previously had run off with a small craft and gone pirating. This was enough information to make a certainty of what had formerly been only a suspicion as to the stranger's character. The worthy Solomon Lloyd therefore gave additional touches to his defensive arrangements to ensure that he was not taken at a disadvantage.

"Then it grew a great calm. Wee could discerne a fellow on ye quarter deck wearing a sword. As he drew near this hellish imp cryed, 'Strike you doggs, which (we) perceived was not by a general consent for he was called away. Our boatswain in a fury ran upon ye poop unknown to ye captain and answered that wee would strike to noe such doggs as hee, telling him the rogue Evory and all his accomplices were all hanged. The captain was angry that he spoke without orders. Then ordered to hail him and askt what was his reason to dogg us. One stept forward on ye forecastle, beckoning with his hand, and said, 'Gentlemen, Wee want not your ship nor men, but money.' Wee told them had none for them but bid them come up along our side and take it as (they) could gett it in them. A parcel of blood hound rogues

clashed their cutlasses and said they would have it or our heart's blood. Saying 'What, do you not know us to be the *Mocho*?' Our answer was 'Yes, Yes.' Thereon they gave a great shout, and soe they all went out of sight and wee to our quarters. They were going to hoist colours but the ensigne halliards broke, which our people perceiving gave a great shout, soe they let them alone. As soon as they could bring their chase guns to bear fired upon us and soe kept on our quarters. Our guns would not bear in a small space, but as soon as did we gave them better than did like. His second shott carried away our sprit sail yard; about ½ an hour after or more, he came up alongside, and soe wee poured in upon him and continued sometimes broadsides, and sometimes 3 or 4 guns as opportunity presented and could bring them to do best service. He was going to lay us athwart ye hause, but by God's providence Captain Hide frustrated his intent by pouring a broadside into him which made him give back and go asterne where he lay and paused without firing. Then in a small space fired one gun; ye shott came in at our Round House window without damage to any person. After which he filled and bore away and when was about ¼ mile off fired a gun to leward which we answered by another to windward. About an hour after he tackt and came up with us again. We made no sail but lay by to receive him, but he kept a loff

off. The distance at most in all our firing was never more than two ships' length. The time of our engagement was from ½ an hour after eleven till about 3 after noon. When came to see what damage was sustained found our chief mate Mr. Smith wounded in the leg, our barber had two of his fingers shott off, the Gunner's boy had his legg shot off, ye boatswain's boy (a lad of 13) was shott in ye thigh (other minor casualties). Wee gave the Almighty our most condign thanks for his mercy that delivered us not to ye worst of enemies, for truly he was strong, having at least an hundred Europeans on board, 34 guns mounted besides 10 patteteurs and 3 morters in the head."

Truly a gallant action and one worthy of the best traditions of the East India Company's service. If the spirit of the *Dorrill* captain and her crew had been more common, the canker of piracy would not have bitten so deeply as it did into the Indian trade. But the times were not propitious for the cultivation of the type of loyal courage that was needed to deal with the pirates. Humble seamen could not be expected to emulate the higher virtues when they saw the greatest in their native land subsidising the pirate king and, as they may well have supposed, participating in the spoils of his infamy.

It lies outside the purpose of this work to follow Kidd closely through the various stages of his later career. Suffice it to sketch him quitting the

Indian seas, gorged with his ill-gotten gains, at the end of 1698, arriving in New York and undergoing arrest by the orders of his patron the Earl of Bellamont, and finally being tried in England and suffering a malefactor's doom at Execution Dock on May 23, 1701. A spurious interest has been excited in later times by the question whether the evidence on which Kidd was convicted was sufficient to hang him. There was little or no direct testimony of his misdeeds and his defence—that he was acting under the duress of mutinous followers—was sufficiently plausible to afford ground for the argument that he might have been a wronged man. But no one who has investigated the documents bearing on his career in the East can be under any sort of doubt as to the complete justice of his sentence. He was a ruffianly criminal who did infinite mischief to his country's cause in the East, and he richly deserved the punishment meted out to him. His sole merit in the pages of history is that his share of the spoil of the *Queda Merchant* and other ships—£6,472—went to augment the endowment of Greenwich Hospital, where so many old sailors in subsequent years were to find a safe haven in the evening of their life.

CHAPTER XI

Annesley's Fall from Power

Critical condition of Annesley and his colleagues—Death of the Governor—His friendship for the English—The new Governor a different type of official—The *Queda Merchant* outrage—Mocullees Khan, a great noble, interested in the vessel—Annesley bribes the Harcoora to secure a good report—Inaction of the authorities—The Every Proclamation Bowdlerised—Sir John Child's estate—Knavery of the Parrakhs—Annesley and Vaux at open enmity—A lively correspondence—Death of Vaux by drowning—Vaux's diary—The Court of Directors' distrust of Annesley—Sir John Gayer's adverse reports on Annesley—The Court of Directors dismiss Annesley from their service and appoint Stephen Colt in his place—Annesley's defence—Captain Alexander Hamilton's aspersions on Annesley's character.

AS the successive accounts of Kidd's depredations reached Surat the position of Annesley and his fellow-countrymen became more critical. They could no longer assume the attitude of injured innocence taken up in the earlier troubles. It was useless to assert that the English were not to be identified with the pirates when stories were being brought in daily of movements of piratical

craft crammed with English seamen, many of whom were actually recognised by reliable native sailors as former servants of the East India Company: it was equally purposeless to maintain that the marauders were merely outlaws of the class that every country possessed when the pirate commander sailed under the English colours and possessed credentials whose authenticity was beyond dispute. All that the unfortunate Englishmen, living under the heavy cloud of their nation's dishonour, could do was to make themselves as inconspicuous as possible and hope against hope that the dastardly deeds of their countrymen would not result in their being made to suffer for their compatriots' sins.

Cheerless as Annesley's outlook was at this juncture, it was made additionally depressing by the death of the Governor who had proved himself so well disposed to the Company's servants on the occasion of the previous crisis. "He was a friend to the English nation and of extraordinary justice and uprightness, that opprest none and took no bribes," was Annesley's striking tribute to him in announcing his death to his superiors. The new Governor differed in every respect from his predecessor. Report said that he had purchased his office for a lakh of rupees after a severe competition with rivals. The statement was supported from the first day of his assuming office by his conduct, which was that of a greedy, intolerant

official intent on using power for private aggrandisement. Annesley, who was a shrewd judge of men, gives an interesting picture of him as he appeared when he had been nearly a twelvemonth in power. "He has great friends, and so much wit in his sensuality," said the factor, "to feed them with part of what he extorts as he bought his place by their means. So that it is not probable the abuse of his power will reach the King's ear as soon as we desire." An early taste of the Governor's quality was supplied almost immediately after his arrival in Surat when, on Kisso and Vittul Parrakh being dismissed from employment as the Company's brokers and their uncle Venwallidas appointed in their stead, blackmail to the amount of Rs. 7,000 was levied ere the new broker was allowed to act.

The affair of the *Queda Merchant* made the greater stir in Surat because of the circumstance that the rifled cargo belonged to one of the principal Lords of Aurungzebe's Court, Mocullees Khan. Where a mere merchant like Abdul Guffore suffered, sympathy at Court was largely regulated by the amount of *backsheesh* that the victim was able to distribute. But when any in the Court circle were hit the loss became a personal one and a very different sequel resulted. In the case of the *Queda Merchant* the story of wrong lost nothing in the telling. The Nakoda, or native captain, burning with resentment, went hotfoot to Court,

painting on the way lurid pictures of the doings of Kidd, whose Commission under the Royal Seal he was able to give evidence of having actually seen. Soon came news brought to the English factory by an Armenian that Mocullees Khan "had presented them all before the King, and laid it to our (the English) charge alone, requesting a Goozebunder or messenger to carry orders to their Governor to force us to make satisfaction for their loss or bring Samuel Annesley and the chief broker to Court to answer before the King: which 'tis said is granted," added the report. A further communication placed the damages which Mocullees Khan had instructed his broker to demand from the Company at Rs. 1,50,000.

Annesley rested under no misapprehension as to the consequences which would follow from the pirate's depredations. Even a few weeks before the crowning example of Kidd's rascality had been furnished in the capture of the *Queda Merchant* he had given his support to the warning that had already gone to London from Bombay as to the certain effect of these continuous outrages at sea. "Your honours' estate, trade and servants' liberty and lives here," he wrote, "are in continuall danger and may be shortly so all over India. Wee are at this instant prisoners at large and how soon wee may be straiter confined by the Governor or massacred by the rabble God alone knows". . .

Annesley added that "the damage these rogues

had done to the inhabitants of Suratt and the other adjacent towns was estimated at the enormous figure of Rs. 50,00,000. As a practical step to neutralise the mischief Annesley had by the usual means made friends of the Harcoora. In explanation of what he had done he wrote, "This fellow's letters gain strange credit at Court, and answers generally he procures according to his mind. . . . He is a dangerous man to be displeased. Therefore, tho' at some charge wee must keep him our friend, for without it he injures all he has to do with."

The course of events appeared to indicate that the Harcoora's interested efforts to put the best possible face upon the Company's position in regard to the pirates had not been without effect. Or it may have been, as stated at the time, that Aurungzebe was apprehensive that too drastic action would lead to the withdrawal of the convoys of the Mocha and Jeddah ships for which he had a tender solicitude owing to their association with the pilgrimage. Anyway, none of the dire consequences that had been feared followed. A stern letter from the Governor demanding that guarantees should be given for the clearing of the seas of pirates and that damages should be paid in respect of the *Queda Merchant* was the only immediate sign of a coming storm.

Annesley, in his cautious way, avoided any action which might give the authorities an opening for raising unpleasant new issues or unduly pressing

old controversies. Thus it happened that when the Royal Proclamation against Evory was received, instead of immediately placing it before the Governor as proof of good faith, as the directors clearly anticipated they would, Annesley and his Council decided not to make the Proclamation public "because," they explained in writing to London, "if wee acknowledge that these country ships were lately robbed by Englishmen and the plunder conveyed to England they may require satisfaction of us, and ye proclamation specifying ye number of men to be 130 and each of their shares of the plunder 1000£ will direct them what to demand."

At the same time it was no doubt desirable that some information as to the proceedings in England should be given. Therefore, Annesley stated, the Council had given their own discreet version of the rescript, which was that "his Majesty being informed that several of his subjects have joyned with some of other nations to rob on ye high seas, hath ordered them to be brought to justice and promised rewards for each of their persons, and ye Right Honourable Company abhorring such villainous practices have done ye same." Even a Mogul official would have found it difficult to make capital out of this extremely wary declaration.

It was not alone the imminence of serious trouble with the Mogul Government that caused Annesley anxiety at this juncture. Vaux was a perpetual

source of annoyance. A loud-mouthed, excitable individual not overburdened with scruple, he was the type of man to be a very dangerous enemy in a crisis in which he was not directly involved and against one of the parties to which he entertained a strong antagonism. Strangely enough, Annesley's earliest relations with him after their mutual release from captivity were of a quasi-friendly character. They had to do with the realisation of Sir John Child's estate, a very extensive one amounting in value, it was asserted, to £100,000.

Lady Child had married George Weldon, the envoy to the Mogul Court, and was awaiting the opportunity of taking passage with him to England when the episode of the *Queda Merchant* occurred. Pending departure, "Lady Weldon," as she was wrongly styled, enlisted Annesley's and Vaux's aid in dealing with a complication which had arisen through the exercise of a characteristic piece of knavery by the Parrakhs. Soon after Child's death the wily Banians sent in a new and entirely false charge on the estate. It was disputed by the trustees and the matter by agreement was referred to the Agent and Council at Surat. But when the award was delivered against the claim by Annesley and Vaux the Parrakhs repudiated it because it was not formally made by Annesley in Council.

It is not clear why Vaux was called in to assist instead of Annesley's colleagues. Most probably

being a close friend of Mrs. Weldon he was requested by her to act on her behalf in the matter. Whatever the explanation, it is obvious that the Parrakh's plea was a mere subterfuge. Annesley was extremely indignant at the attitude assumed by the ex-brokers. "Were the Parracks guilty of no other ill actions," he wrote to Gayer, "this alone is enough to make them abhorred by all honest men: that they should dare to injure the dead and wrong the widow and fatherless—and such a lady as was their master's relict—in no mean and inconsiderable summes. We question not Your Excellency will (exercise) justice on such monsters of baseness, ingratitude and villainy, who would render any of us the same measure on the like occasion, though while we are living and in power they may fawn upon and flatter us." Annesley, having thus emptied the vials of his wrath upon the rascally couple, concluded with the practical suggestion that they should be charged in the Company's books with the balance due to Mrs. Weldon and that the account should be made up with interest from year to year. This course, it may here be stated, was followed, with the result that a further source of complication was introduced into the already involved transactions of the Parrakhs.

Not many weeks were to elapse after this association of Annesley and Vaux before the two were once more at open enmity. The question at issue

was the old one of Vaux's detention at Surat. The ex-Deputy-Governor fretted and fumed under the restraint which was put upon his movements. After many verbal passages he launched a long and bitter written protest against the action, or supposed action, of the Surat Council. He stated that Harris and Annesley, "the Mogul's prisoners in irons," had taken it upon themselves to write a letter to the Mogul in his name, without his knowledge or consent, promising that he would undertake to see ratified all that Sir John Child had pledged himself to do. In consequence his name has been put in the *farman* or general pardon to the English nation, and on the decision of the Bombay Council he had gone to Surat to receive the document. As he understood that according to the *farman* he was to remain as hostage at Surat, he wrote to his relations in England explaining the circumstances in which he was detained, and because of his writing that letter he had been suspended the Company's service, pending the arrival of Sir John Goldsborough, who was to consider his crime. "But it pleased God to give him a summons to another world." Since then, however, a second Sir John had arrived, who had not found it seasonable either to acquit or to condemn him. In view of these facts he insisted upon his instant release on pain of the institution of legal proceedings against those who caused him to be detained.

Sir John Gayer replied to Vaux's letter in a spirit of reciprocal hostility. After alluding to the latter's insulting reference to Harris and Annesley as "the Mogul's prisoners in irons," he told him bluntly that it was by his own doing that he went to Surat to receive the new *farman*. At the time he "seemed to rejoice much and be not a little lifted up," his idea then probably being that his mission would entitle him to the Chiefship in India. "But," proceeded Gayer, "you found yourself mistaken, which made you uneasy and quarrelsome to that degree that almost all people reputed you little better than a madman."

The writer denied that Vaux was compelled to remain in Surat by the Company's officers. As far as they were concerned he was quite at liberty to leave when he pleased so to do. Sir John Gayer went on: "Why any of us that you soe vainly charge should be obliged to bribe on your account that has so industriously endeavoured to destroy their interest (from whom you have had your all) to bring the greatest dishonour possible on the English nation by your citeing their servants before ye country justice . . . not to mention the unparalleled affronts you have given their chief servants in these parts, all the while you have been permitted freely to trade jointly with us, we can't imagine." Annesley supported Gayer's arguments in a letter of his own in which he dealt contemptuously with Vaux's complaint of deten-

tion. It was not necessary, he said, for Vaux to have come to Surat to receive the *farman*. It was only a matter of form "which the meanest soldier in the garrison drest up a little well might have discharged." He would not, he averred, make himself ridiculous by getting from the authorities a permit to leave which Vaux would afterwards slight.

Vaux hotly retorted on these allegations that his story of duress was a sham, and was told in a counter retort from Annesley that if he were as anxious to quit Surat as he represented himself to be, he would long since have "footed it overland to Bombay." This elegant correspondence and the underlying controversy might have continued indefinitely, had not an end been put to it, and to Vaux's life by an accident. While sailing one day off Swally his boat was overturned, and before assistance could reach him he was drowned. He was buried not far from the scene of the disaster, on a point on the shore where the monument raised over his grave by his widow was for a long period a conspicuous landmark to mariners entering the river on their way to Surat. The avaricious Governor of Surat on learning of Vaux's death laid an embargo upon his property, and it was only through Annesley's intervention and the payment of a large sum by way of blackmail that Mrs. Vaux was ultimately allowed to leave with her children for England.

Thus terminated a stormy career which has left a heavy mark on the annals of the English in Western India. A curious relic of the man is a diary which is preserved amongst the Manuscripts at the British Museum. It is a long rambling composition revealing the intense vanity of the writer. One passage in it shows the state of mind into which Aurungzebe had been thrown by the cumulative acts of piracy in the Indian Ocean. Vaux wrote on the authority of the Harcoora that nothing could persuade the Mogul that it was not the English who had committed these crimes, "because they had brought so very great charges in their late wars with him," and that he (the Emperor) was determined that "if in a short time the Company did not behave better they would be utterly expelled the country never to be (allowed) in it again." The menace conveyed in these reported words was soon to be illustrated in poignant fashion in the relations between the local Mogul authorities and the Surat factors. But before the narrative takes up anew the negotiations between the Surat Council and the Governor, some account must be given of Annesley's personal position, which had become critical owing to the increasing distrust with which he was regarded by his employers.

In a previous chapter we have noted how exasperated the directors had shown themselves to be at the manner in which the Surat accounts were

kept. They sent out repeated orders that the matters in doubt should be cleared up, and laid especial stress upon the importance of a settlement with the Parrakhs, whose liabilities to the Company were very large. Annesley acted up to the spirit of these instructions, but stated with a fair show of truth that he was unable to make any progress owing to the confused condition into which the Company's affairs had been brought by the trouble with the Mogul authorities. He could not, he asserted, owing to his imprisonment and illness, get proper access to the books, and, besides this, he found it impossible to secure the attendance of the Parrakhs, who kept away from the factory and ignored all applications for their accounts. It seems probable in the light of the record of events at that time that the explanation was an honest one.

But the directors ensconced in their comfortable rooms in Leadenhall Street could not conceive a state of things which prevented the apparently simple investigations and disclosures they required. Prone to take the dark view of an official's shortcomings, they were led to the conclusion that the delay in carrying out their instructions was caused by a corrupt understanding between Annesley and the Parrakhs.

Gayer's reports on the Surat factory tended to support this view. For some reason not very apparent Gayer had from the first taken a strong

dislike to Annesley, and when he had occasion to refer to him in his communications to the directors, he was usually depreciatory in his comments.

In one of his letters sent home in May, 1697, he wrote: "The President, I fear, doth not serve the Company's interest so much as he might. . . . A little gain to himself is preferred before a great deal to the Company. Yet as circumstances are I can't displace him, for that I can't go to Surat and interlopers may drop in; but I have fettered him with a Council as well as I can. Mr. Colt (the second in the Surat Council), I believe, is pretty honest though very covetous; him the President hates and would fain cast him off and have Mr. Burmiston in his room; but that must not be, for then they two will go hand in hand, though Mr. Burmiston now seems to dislike him. Mr. Bendall (the third in the Surat Council), I know, is honest. . . . The Right Honourable Company, in their general of the 7th August (1696), request us to render them an account of the grounds of complaint that Mr. Uphill and Mr. Bendall have against President Annesley. Could they or we have proved anything we should have advised of it in that letter, but that will be very hard to be done. Both they and we, and all here at Surat that have any regard to the Honourable Company's interest, have violent suspicions of his unfaithfulness. The brokers and he, I believe, mortally hate each other, and yet, Banian like, when there's anything

to be got they can dissemble all and be very good friends. I believe they equally fear each other, for that I presume they are all guilty, therefore durst not discover one's works of darkness lest all should come to light. Whatsoever is visibly done amiss the President throws it on the brokers, and they on the creditors, and so it runns."

In these caustic criticisms of Annesley by his superior we get a clear idea of the nature of the charges that were laid at his door. But it would be unfair to accept implicitly the view of the Surat factor's character here set out. Gayer had never met Annesley; his impressions of him were obtained at second hand, and probably from his enemies who were far more numerous than his friends. Uphill, as we have seen, was a close intimate of Vaux and shared his animosity of Annesley to the extent at all events of willingly plotting against him. The truth is probably that Annesley, as was represented, had used his opportunities for private trading to the fullest extent. In doing this he had only acted as other Company officials in high position had done before him—as even the immaculate Sir John Child, for example, had done in life. But he was unfortunate in holding the chief office at a time of almost unexampled depression in the Company's affairs in Western India, and it was easy to give a sinister complexion to his activities when every ship arriving home brought a tale of disaster and loss.

Gayer continued at intervals to feed the directors with stories to Annesley's disparagement. In the early part of 1698, he wrote that he had endeavoured to discover to what extent Annesley was guilty in respect of some damaged cloth that had been sent home, but without result. He had, however, been "credibly informed that President Annesley has remitted home by bills on the Dutch Company forty thousand rupees." Whether this were true or not, Gayer presumed the directors would be able to discover. "It's our revised (*sic*) opinion," he added, "that Your Honours' affairs at Surat will never be managed as they ought for Your interest while Mr Annesley is there at the head of affairs."

This very decided expression of view sealed Annesley's official career. There was a brisk correspondence—angry on the part of the directors, plausible and argumentative on that of the factor—and then the bolt fell in dramatic circumstances, which will be related in the next chapter. There must always be doubt as to whether Annesley was more sinning or sinned against. His dismissal from the Company's employ, and the appointment of Stephen Colt, the second in Council, in his room was a drastic measure—peculiarly drastic in the conditions of the times and having regard to all that Annesley had passed through. Was it justified? If, as the directors roundly asserted, the imperfections in the Surat accounts were due to

rascality, undoubtedly he only got his deserts. But the question persists: Was he really guilty of the common frauds laid at his door? On this point, we may appropriately hear what Annesley himself had to say. His defence against the major charge is contained in a long communication he addressed to the directors after the receipt of the letter of dismissal. It is a characteristic document, illustrating the writer's point of view with considerable skill.

Annesley stated that his confinement by the Governor prevented him from giving an account of his twenty-one years' service with the Company in reply to their communications signifying their "high displeasure" at his conduct. Therefore, he was forced "in a more imperfect manner to address them with all submission for removing the misapprehension he suffered (under) in his estate and reputation."

"It was," he proceeded, "always my ambition to do Your Honours some signal piece of service upon the brokers, not out of private resentment (though there was room enough for that) but from a stronger obligation of conscience and duty, which the violent wars in Europe and your great losses thereby, with the opposition of a contrary party at home and the pyrates abroad hath hitherto hindered for want of a stock in my power to give me the ascendent over them." He then dealt with a statement in one of the Court's letters, that they

believed that not only the brokers but the President himself was a principal creditor, his identity being concealed under false names.

To this accusation Annesley replied: "I must confess I wish it was so. I must sollemnly protest the contrary and that I have never had a rupee in your cash under any borrowed name. Before I was in a way not to raise my fortune, but maintain myself. 'Twas the year '87 when I entered into a confinement, upon Sir John Child's going to Bombay on the designed war with the Moors, and from December '88 to April '90 was in irons. The time and my thoughts since have been filled with troubles from the pyrates, &c. Sometimes I was a prisoner strictly shut up and fettered: since 10 months for the King's ship (the *Gunjsawaee*), afterwards so at large; never abroad without a guard, nor at home without ye same at a distance and the Governor's spys upon me. Under the circumstances of these seas infested with rogues and those of Europe with the French, and the excessive depression of our credit on ye scandal of pyracy and want of circulating stock, trade could not flourish."

In later passages Annesley took credit for not having gone over to the Company's rivals as he might have done on receipt of their letter of dismissal. Instead of taking that course he had agreed to prepare their accounts, "which Mr. Green through sottishness, Mr. Bendall through incapacity, Mr.

Uphill through pretended want of light, and Mr. Colt through wilfulness (though their proper, peculiar employ), never meddled with." In spite of all he was still serving them "without sallary, perquisite or competent maintenance," and his thoughts were thereby in great measure diverted from the necessity of providing for himself and family "liable to the same troubles, want of liberty, rage of the mobile, oppression of the Governor and misapprehension of the King (Aurungzebe) as the pyrates subject your servants to." Annesley concluded with a bitter allusion to the fact that he had been superseded by Colt. "Had you been pleased to have sent any one from England," he wrote, "my disgrace would have been less," but instead of doing that they had put over his head "one that was before under me as to place and (I presume I may with modesty say) as to everything else."

There was force in Annesley's contention that the exceptional circumstances of the time—the troubles with the pirates, the prolonged stoppages of trade arising out of them, and the war in Europe —had inevitably disorganised affairs at Surat. Whether this was a good answer to the allegations of irregularities in the accounts is not easy to determine. All that is certain is that Annesley had many accusers, and amongst them a number who had a good inner knowledge of the finances of the Surat factory. His general disposition is repre-

sented as grasping and unscrupulous. In this connection Captain Alexander Hamilton tells a story which if true goes very far to account for his almost universal unpopularity.

According to the Scotch interloper it was the practice in Annesley's time for English seamen to take service upon the Mogul ships, their superior talents in navigation making them highly acceptable to their native employers. For this service they received what in those days were considered extremely handsome emoluments, amounting in some cases to as much as £15 per month. Possibly intent on keeping down desertions from the Company's ships, Annesley directed that the sailors so employed should only receive half their pay: the second half he put into his own pocket. "Some," says Hamilton, "through fear or necessity, complied; others, again, who despised both his power and tyranny, would by no means come into his measures, and those he lookt on as rebels, and persecuted them to the utmost of his power, bribing the Mogul's Governor to plague us; so some were ruined by his villainy, whilst others bade him open defiance: and we were not wanting on our side to expose him and his masters to the Mogul's subjects, which in the end was the loss of both their esteem and credit among the trading people of the country. The poorest sort, whose maintenance depended on their labour and industry, losing their employs in the Moorish Mer-

chant service, were obliged to fall on new schemes to support themselves, not very well suited to the Company's interest, for some went and joyned themselves with the pirates."

Such were Hamilton's allegations, and they may be taken for what they are worth, which perhaps is not much if we recall how bitterly the two hated each other. We may, however, safely deduce from the character of the charges made that Annesley was cordially disliked by the unattached class of traders of whom Hamilton was a good representative.

CHAPTER XII

The Old Company Deposed—Dark Days in Surat

A new crisis at Surat—Disquieting reports of the suppression of the Company and the formation of a new body—The intelligent anticipation of events—Aurungzebe's fresh outburst of anger—The English factory invested by Mogul troops—A brief respite—Venwallidas the Company's broker threatened with death—He pleads with Annesley to secure his release by agreeing to the Governor's demands—Annesley calls a conference of all the English in the factory—A decision is unanimously reached to give the required guarantees against pirates—Sir John Gayer arrives at Swally—His instructions to Annesley to refuse to give the indemnity demanded—Under threats of an immediate attack Annesley yields to the Governor—Arrival of the ship *Russell* with the formal intimation of Annesley's dismissal—Annesley's reception of the news—Colt assumes office—The Governor suspects a trick—Gayer discusses Annesley's dismissal—Capture of Chivers and several of his men—Gayer's curious attitude in regard to the captive pirates.

THE comparative peace which the inmates of the English factory in Surat enjoyed after the appointment of the new Governor in the latter half of 1698 was only the calm that precedes the

storm. In the background all the while was preparing a new crisis which before it had spent itself was to witness the fortunes of the East India Company and consequently of the English in Western India at their lowest ebb. The fresh upheaval was due to the old trouble over the pirates. Fires of native resentment had been rekindled by the capture by one of the pirates of a fine "tall" ship with a cargo reputed to be worth £150,000 belonging to a Surat merchant named Hassan Ahmedan.

As before, public indignation was directed towards Annesley and his colleagues. Howling mobs besieged the factory, shouting their execrations at the inmates securely housed behind the substantial walls of the building; in the streets individual Englishmen were insulted and threatened. Meanwhile, excited appeals were being made to the Governor for vengeance, and the Harcoora, with his pen heavily dipped in colour, was sending to the Emperor picturesque accounts of the infidels' latest act of depravity. In fine, all the now highly efficient machinery of public agitation was at work with the object of inflicting revenge on, and obtaining reparation from, the East India Company's servants.

A threatening situation in itself was made additionally disquieting for the unfortunates in the factory by the circulation of ominous reports of the suppression of the Company by edict of

Parliament. They were the intelligent anticipation of news that was soon to arrive in India. In the Parliamentary Session of 1698 an Act was passed "for raising a sum not exceeding two millions upon a fund, for payment of annuities after the rate of eight pounds per cent. and for settling the trade of the East Indies." In September of the same year further legislative action was taken, incorporating the subscribers of the sum stated by a Royal Charter under the name of the General Society Trading to the East Indies. A few days later the majority of the subscribers were incorporated by another Charter as a Company trading on a Joint Stock under the name of the English Company Trading to the East Indies.

This New Company, as it came to be known, was the outcome of a prolonged contest between the East India Company and its remorseless rivals who had long plotted and intrigued against its exclusive privileges. The fight had for years been inconclusive, but at length the urgent financial needs of the Government of the day supplied the hated "interlopers" with their opportunity. The State wanted money badly and it practically offered its favours to the highest bidders. The Old Company agreed to advance £700,000 at 4 per cent. provided its privileges were confirmed by Act of Parliament; the promoters of the New Company capped this by an offer of two millions at 8 per cent. interest for the right of exclusive trade with India.

The higher bid carried the day and the Old Company retired discomfited into the background, consoling itself as best it could with a permission to carry on its trade in India until September 29, 1701. In England the arrangement was regarded as the sounding of the death-knell of the historic organisation which for a century had upheld the interests of English trade in the East. But threatened lives are sometimes long ones, and the Old Company—the London Company, as it was now known—was to emerge triumphant from its perils, and for another century and half make history in India before it finally disappeared.

Aurungzebe's anger was never difficult to arouse where stories of English piracy were concerned, and it blazed up anew at the Harcoora's report of the latest sea crime. With all the peremptoriness of which he was master, he ordered that the guarantee against piracy should be rigidly enforced on the European Companies, and that they should also pay compensation for the robbed vessels or cease their trade. The Surat Governor required no special incentive to zeal in a case like this in which openings offered for the gratification of his love of tyranny and his avarice.

The storm broke on New Year's Day, 1699 (new style). On the afternoon of that day Annesley received a message from the Governor, intimating that he had received instructions from the Emperor of the character indicated and further

stating that on the following day he would send guards to the factory. The English factors from this knew very well what was in store for them. After a hasty consultation they set to work to munition and provision the building against a possible siege. In the meantime boats were sent out to sea to warn approaching English vessels against entering the port. The next day Annesley's old friend Ushoor Beg appeared on the scene with a force of some five or six hundred soldiers. He brought from the Governor an ultimatum that the English were to yield to the Emperor's demands or to leave the country forthwith. Annesley, who had been rendered cautious by brutal experience, took care to keep the Mogul soldiers on the right side of the factory gates, and he only admitted the commander and another officer into the interior of the establishment. With these he parleyed, pointing out the unreasonable and, indeed, impossible character of the order, and intimating that as the Surat factory was subordinate to Bombay it would be necessary to write there for instructions prior to acting.

After referring to his superior Ushoor Beg agreed to give the English ten days' grace, but in the evening an intimation was given that if at the end of the period indicated they did not comply with the Imperial demands they would assuredly be driven out of the town. The Dutch and the French were similarly treated. They took up

the same attitude as their English rivals, asserting that it was not in their power to give the guarantee.

Although the Governor had engaged himself to leave the question over for ten days, he did not scruple in the meantime to carry on active measures in furtherance of his designs. By drum beat all communication with the factories was prohibited, and when in defiance of the order a wretched Banian was seen leaving the apartments of one of the Europeans he was ordered by the Governor "to be chawbuckt,[1] fettered in irons and sent to the common jail." Such was the reign of terror created by this and similar incidents that in time no Indian dare go near the factories. On January 5 the tyrant in power caused Venwallidas and two other brokers employed by the Company to be seized and brought into his presence with their hands tied behind them, and when they protested their inability to assent to the conditions of the Imperial decree he caused them to be barbarously whipped by his soldiers.

At the end of a stormy interview they were thrown into prison with the threat that a worse fate was in store for them if they did not yield. Later in the day ropes were put round their necks, and they were led to the Castle Green as if for

[1] *Chawbuck.* A whip; to whip. An obsolete vulgarism from *chabuk*, "alert"; in Hindustanee, a horsewhip. It seems to be the same as the *sjambok* in use at the Cape.—HOBSON-JOBSON.

execution. Then their fortitude failed them, and they implored their jailers to permit them to proceed to the factory to interview Annesley and endeavour to persuade him to give the required guarantees. As this was exactly what the coercion had been applied for, the captives were given their liberty, though on the distinct understanding that the fetters would be reimposed if they failed in their mission.

Venwallidas and his colleagues in due course put in an appearance at the factory, and told their moving story to the Council. The English factors were duly impressed by it, and after long deliberation came to the conclusion, in view of the serious results of a rupture to the Company and the danger of massacre, to call a general Council of all the Company's servants in the factory. This course was no doubt taken to divide the responsibility for a surrender if such were decided upon. Annesley had written to Gayer for full powers to act, but there had been no time to receive his reply. When it did reach its destination, it was an emphatic refusal to delegate authority, accompanied by a sharp expression of surprise that Annesley should have dared to ask such a concession. Power or no power, Annesley had to act. The Governor's blood was up, and it was manifest that if his demands were not met the lives of all in the factory were in imminent peril.

The conference called by Annesley registered a

foregone conclusion. No single member of the community was prepared to offer himself a sacrifice upon the altar of duty—a duty which involved a rigid limitation of the right of the Council to give the necessary guarantees. The facts of the situation seemed to all to point to one conclusion. After debate, therefore, those present unanimously resolved "that should the Governor proceed to the extremities which he threatens, which it appears plain he will, wee are not able to withstand him, being but 13 Europeans in a wide open house whereunto they can in three several places make a descent upon us in a body more than twenty men abreast and with smaller numbers with little more difficulty in several others."

Before effect could be given to the decision, a new face was put upon the situation by the arrival of Sir John Gayer at Swally. He had come up from Bombay full of resolution to concede nothing to the extortionate "Moors," and as soon after his arrival there as possible, from the safe vantage point of the Company's well-armed ship *Mary*, issued imperative instructions to Annesley "to pay no part of the 14,00,000Rs. demanded nor to give any such security as was required." The utmost concession that he would permit the Surat President to make was to agree to continue the convoy of the Mocha and Jeddah fleets for another year, and to promise with the aid of men-of-war that were coming out for the

purpose to extirpate the pirates. If in the face of these substantial pledges the Governor was so "inconsiderate" as to expel them, "they were to repair to the ship and not fail to protest against their treatment as being contrary to the phirmands granted to them by the King."

Consideration was the last of the Surat Governor's qualities: he wanted hard cash and the Company's guarantee, and nothing would divert him from securing this his pound of flesh—not even the majesty of English power entrenched behind the bulwarks of the *Mary*. The negotiations, however, were continued for some time longer with Venwallidas and the other brokers acting as intermediaries between the Governor and Gayer. At length, on January 18, after repeated refusals on the latter's part to accede to the demands, the irate Mogul official intimated that if a positive answer was not given in the sense in which he required an answer he should proceed to extremities.

Gayer was no more impressed by this practical ultimatum than he had been by earlier threats. He was out of touch with the realities of the crisis, and regarded the possibility of an attack upon the factory as remote. Annesley and his colleagues ashore, however, well understood what would happen if the Governor did not get his way. They had seen the Dutch after a bold show of defiance—the fortification of their factory with forty heavy

guns and the bringing in of a strong body of Europeans as garrison—surrender to the extent of offering security for Mogul ships in the Red Sea and paying a sum of Rs. 25,000 by way of part compensation, and they knew that it was useless for them to attempt what their more powerful neighbours had failed to accomplish. They temporised as long as they could, and then on January 25, when the factory was surrounded by troops whose orders were to break in upon them in case of further resistance, they surrendered. When Venwallidas carried to the Governor Annesley's letter making submission and giving the required security, that worthy grimly remarked that it was well that the Englishmen had come to their senses, for he had resolved, if they had further held out, to have secured their persons, and had them conveyed to the castle from there to be publicly executed "as pyrates convicted by Indians and Christians."

Now that the English and Dutch had given in their adhesion to his demands, the Governor turned his attention to the French. He conducted his measures with characteristic brutality. Associated with the commerical activities of the French in Surat was a religious propaganda conducted by a community of Jesuit Fathers. As the house of this Order was unprotected, it became the object of the first attentions of the Governor's myrmidons. They seized the Superior and dragged

him into the open and compelled him to sit for hours in the blazing sunlight, "abusing and beating him in the most barbarous manner, and threatening to bore holes in his ears unless he induced the French factors to come to terms." Thus coerced, the French, like the English, at length made their peace by agreeing to give the required guarantee and an accompanying solatium to the Governor.

The Governor had won a great triumph, and it only now needed the signing of a formal obligation to put a final seal upon it. While this last act of submission was being prepared the Company's ship *Russell* arrived in Surat from England with the formal notification of Annesley's dismissal from the service. It was conveyed in a letter addressed to Colt, who was given full power to act in the dismissed President's room. Colt, who seems to have had no prior inkling of the Company's intentions, lost no time in making the changes he was empowered to introduce. Immediately after receiving it, he handed Annesley the directors' communication, the terms of which were so explicit as to leave no opening for doubt as to the fixed determination of the Company to get rid of their Surat President once and for all.

Annesley met his fate with dignified composure. He simply said that his dismissal being by the Company's orders, he should submit to the decision. He afterwards showed that he was as good as his word, for, as his letter already quoted shows, he not

only did his best to facilitate the establishment of the new order by straightening out the muddled accounts, but he held completely aloof from the intrigues against the Company which at the moment were unusually rife in the ranks of the unattached Englishmen outside. Annesley never had justice done him for this truly magnanimous conduct. The directors accepted the services he rendered after his removal from office as a matter of course, and it does not appear that they ever paid him for them beyond making a small grant for daily expenses.

Annesley may well have felt relief at vacating what had long been an uneasy throne and what promised in the future to be a still more uncomfortable one. The President, by the broadening effect of precedent, had become the recognised *corpus vile* upon which the Mogul authority wreaked its vengeance when anything went wrong. He had, as Annesley truly said, for years been but a prisoner at large, and his "suffering time" had given him no greater merit in the eyes of his callous masters. The future of the Company was dark and its prospects were nowhere blacker than in Surat, where all interests and influences were combined to bring about what appeared to be the inevitable bankruptcy of the organisation. If he had fixed his own time to leave, Annesley could not, in fact, have elected for a more convenient moment. Still, he clung to the Company as to an old friend. He

had grown grey in its service and he could not with equanimity face the prospect of a career under any other but the very hard taskmasters the directors had always been to him.

Colt entered into his new duties with alacrity. He was a commonplace man, who, to adopt a phrase of Gayer's, was for "peace and pagodas" rather than for hard work and serious responsibility, but he had his ambitions, and the principal of these was to act as President at Surat before he retired to England with a substantial competence. Events were to disappoint his expectation of a life of leisured ease in his pleasant Kent home; his career, indeed, henceforward was to be a singularly troubled one, ending in the condition of semi-captivity which was the common lot of so many Englishmen in this miserable period. But he was not to know this when the fateful message from home was put into his hands and he was able for the first time to taste the sweets of power. His earliest official act was to give the widest publicity to the changes in the factory. The brokers were charged to circulate the news in the bazaars, and a special messenger was sent to the Governor with a letter from Colt stating that Annesley had been dismissed and that the writer reigned in his stead.

A rude shock was given to Colt's complacency when he received an intimation, conveyed through Venwallidas, that the Governor required a trans-

lation of the Company's orders to him. According to the broker there was a strong suspicion that the whole affair was a trick to deceive the authorities, the idea being that Annesley had been displaced in order to enable the Company to evade its responsibilities under the security bond that he had given. Colt was at first disposed to adopt a high line and decline to submit to the Mogul official what was in essence a confidential document. But he thought better of the matter afterwards and sent on the translation demanded. Still the Governor was unconvinced, or professed to be, and maintained towards Colt and his Council an attitude of studied arrogance. When after many humiliating preliminaries Colt was permitted to pay a formal visit to the Governor, he was received by the great man "with much indifference," and was rudely told that it would be to his and the Council's interest to fulfil the engagements entered into by Annesley. Then "after he had entertained them awhile with much menacing language" he dismissed them with a paltry gift of cloth—an ironical substitute for the honourable present usually offered on these occasions in token of good will.

Disputes now became frequent, and they were pressed on the Mogul side with an insolence begotten of contempt for the unfortunate representatives of English trade. In the anguish of his heart Colt, about this period, wrote home to the

directors that the English had become "as despicable to them (the Moguls) as the Portuguese, and as odious as the Jews are in Spain and Portugal." They were, he said, completely at the mercy of one "who is wholly swayed by avarice and tyrant like has no regard to the pleasure of his prince, justice, honour or humanity."

The cup of bitterness filled to overflowing when on April 8 the *Shrewsbury* galley, an interloping vessel, brought definite news of the dethronement of the East India Company, and the establishment of its rival—the New Company. The interlopers, of whom there were many in Surat at this period, made the most of what one of them termed this "most acceptable and welcome news." Soon the bazaars of the city were ringing with the tidings that the old Company had been laid aside owing to the encouragement it had given to the pirates, or, to adopt the picturesque metaphor used by the interlopers, that the "King and Parliament" being made sensible of the Company's misdeeds, had cast it off as an abominable branch "pending the despatch of an Ambassador to India with instructions to send home their Honours' servants to receive condign punishment."

The Governor was too expert a fisher in troubled waters to overlook the excellent chance which this quarrel between the infidels offered of plying his gentle art. He sent for Colt, and in the presence of a large gathering, which included George Bow-

cher and other interlopers, as well as a representative body of native merchants, with Abdul Guffore at their head, demanded to know whether he admitted the authenticity of the Act of Parliament, a copy of which, obligingly supplied by Bowcher, he produced. He was further required to state whether it was true, as alleged, that "they were forbid the trade of India because they abetted the pyrates and that an Ambassador was coming out to cause them to settle their accounts with the natives and then to send them home in irons to receive punishment."

Colt put the best complexion he could on the matter by giving an emphatic denial to the libellous assertions of the interlopers as to their punishment for supposed misdeeds, and stating that a new subscription for East India trade had been sanctioned by Parliament for a total sum of two million pounds, of which the Company, he added, without a strict regard for fact, contributed £350,000. The Governor listened incredulously to the explanation. He had been well coached by the interlopers, and, moreover, he did not want to be persuaded because he scented possibilities of plunder in this feud between two sections of English traders.

When Colt had finished the tyrant sternly ordered Venwallidas to give security for the Company's debts. The unhappy Banian protested his inability to take upon himself so onerous an obligation, whereupon he and the English factors

were unceremoniously bundled out of the assembly into an adjoining apartment, where they were kept close prisoners until on a threat of corporal chastisement the required security was given. Even here the persecution of the Mogul tyrant did not end. Some days later he sent for the Shroffs [1] of the Company's mint, and demanded of them a statement of the bullion received and paid out of the establishment. The demand was acceded to, but the Governor questioned its accuracy and caused the principal official "to be beat out of his presence and another to be strappado'd." His intention in resorting to this calculated system of brutality was only too apparent to Colt. The ruffianly Mogul official "aimed at a bribe," and this, the much-tried factor foresaw, "must be submitted to to prevent greater losses if not utter ruin."

Gayer, who had returned to Bombay at the conclusion of his abortive negotiations with the Governor, happily for himself escaped being involved in these heartbreaking troubles of the Surat Council. He was sufficiently remote from them, indeed, to take quite a philosophic view of the situation. He discussed in pleasant fashion with the directors the ethics of Annesley's dismissal and its expediency. Some might have thought the occasion of sending this old servant

[1] *Shroff*. A money-changer, a banker, an officer employed to ascertain the value of different currencies.—WILSON'S *Glossary*.

into the wilderness ill timed, but Gayer was confident that it was not so—"Let the worst come that will, he cannot now do the Company the injury he would have done if he had continued," he remarked. As for his own part in bringing about the downfall of his colleague, it was "pure zeal" that caused him to write against him. He had done his utmost to "reclaim him." But the writer had been sensible for several years that his exertions were to no purpose, "it being impossible to convince him of being in an error in anything wherein he falsely concludes it is to his interest to persist therein." Not the least notice was to be taken of what Annesley wrote or said, Gayer assured the directors. The ex-President, he stated, was "largely qualified to excuse and vindicate the worst of actions, and having no conscience he makes use of his talent that way to the utmost."

It was once said of a famous statesman whose fierce attacks upon another were of great public interest at the time, that he was not content with getting his enemy down: he must needs jump on his prostrate form. There is something akin to this spirit in Gayer's commentary on his old colleague. The tone, indeed, is so savage that it suggests a consciousness of injustice. On the facts it is perfectly plain that Annesley was not quite so unworthy of trust as his senior in Bombay represented him to be. He was probably an average official with not more than the common

stock of honesty, but with an ability which was in advance of that of his fellows. Like Becky Sharp he would probably have been quite virtuous if he had had £10,000 a year instead of the miserable stipend of a few hundreds on which he was supposed to support the dignity of the Company's chief representative in what from its political affinities was then the most important trading centre in India.

A mere servile desire to curry favour with his employers may have been Gayer's actuating motive in his hostile reports on Annesley. He had gone out charged with a special mission to cleanse what the directors regarded as the Augean stable of Surat and he possibly felt that he must justify his appointment by drastic action. There was a narrowness in his character which fitted him to act as a tool of his employers rather than as an administrator necessarily charged with responsibility for taking independent decisions quickly. In illustration of this failing may be mentioned his singular attitude towards Chivers and some other captured pirates who were brought into Bombay.

After his escapade with Hassan Ahmedan's ship the notorious rover realised his plunder and quitted the East for home in a small ship called the *Margaret*. Incautiously calling at the Cape, he encountered one of the Company's large armed ships, whose captain (Louth), discovering the character of the *Margaret*, promptly seized the craft and

made Chivers and fifteen of his associates prisoners. When Louth reached Bombay with his captives, he was coldly received by Gayer, who afterwards confessed that he "would have had the *Margaret* proceed rather than have filled our prison with 21 criminals in a place where we had before a sufficient number of such as would willingly side with such sparks." The urgent need of stamping out piracy weighed little against Gayer's shrinking from responsibility. He had to act in the end and to conduct a very lively controversy with the Mogul authorities at Surat over the right to the prisoners' custody which the latter claimed. But the prisoners, owing to his indecision, had a good deal of latitude, and some of them at least were eventually left free to take to their old courses.

CHAPTER XIII

The New Company—Sir William Norris's Mission

The New Company establishes itself at Surat—Sir Nicholas Waite, the New Company's President—Disagreements between the Old and the New Company's officials—Waite denounces the Old Company's officials as "thieves and confederates of pyrates"—Sir William Norris's mission to the Great Mogul—Opposition of the Old Company's officials—Norris's reception by the Governor of Surat——Annesley offers his services to Norris—Waite intrigues against Gayer—Arrival of Gayer at Surat—He is seized by the Governor's orders and imprisoned—Waite denounced by Gayer for treachery—Gayer's unjustifiable opposition to Norris's Embassy—Norris quits Surat for the Mogul Court—His affront to Asad Khan, the Prime Minister—Aurungzebe's reception of the mission—Tortuous negotiations—Norris leaves the Mogul Camp in disgust—Aurungzebe orders him to return—Norris declines to obey and is made a virtual prisoner—He is ultimately permitted to depart—His arrival at Surat—Acrimonious controversy between Norris and Waite—Departure of Norris for England—His death at sea.

EXIT the Old Company covered with dishonour: enter the New Company in a blaze of glory. Such was the plan of the promoters of

this trade revolution at the end of the seventeenth century. But things did not by any means work out so smoothly and simply as was hoped and intended. Those in possession always have an advantage over others who are not so situated, and in the case of the Indian trade possession implied not only priority in the markets, but the holding of immensely valuable assets such as established stations and factories, and a complete organisation alike on sea and on land. The New Company were very new to India, and they had not gone far in their career before they were taught costly lessons which put them rather out of countenance with this wonderful enterprise designed to capture the trade of the East from the senile hands of the Leadenhall Street combination.

The first evidence of the New Company's intention to establish itself at Surat was the arrival in the port on November 16, 1699, of Mewse and Brooks, two of the Company's servants. They were quickly followed by Sir Nicholas Waite, who had been appointed to the chief position with the imposing title of "His Majesty's Consul and Minister." Waite had served the Old Company as Chief at Bantam (in Java) and was well versed in Eastern trade. But his personal character was a disagreeable one. He was pompous and overbearing, and under a cover of unctuous piety maintained a shameless dissoluteness of manners. His temper, never good, had been ruffled on the

way up to Surat by the unfriendly reception Sir John Gayer had given him at Bombay. The Old Company's representative not only declined absolutely to recognise "His Majesty's Consul and Minister," but gave him a very clear intimation that his room was preferred to his company. At Surat, on Mogul territory, Waite felt that he could expand himself in the sunshine of his dignity, and proceeded to demand that the Old Company's flag should be hauled down in recognition of his superior position. His pretensions were scornfully rejected and the flag defiantly fluttered on the flagstaff until the exasperated Waite had it pulled down. Then the Old Company's representative caused it to be re-hoisted, and set a guard over the staff with orders to resist any further attempt to interfere with it. The Governor, thinking that the quarrel had gone far enough and feeling that his prerogatives were in danger of infringement, peremptorily ordered Waite to desist from continuing his efforts. Thus thwarted, the New Company's President quitted the field of battle. But he avenged himself for the rebuff by initiating a campaign of calumny against his rivals, whose position at the moment rendered them peculiarly vulnerable to the shafts of malice directed towards them by their enemies.

In a formal letter to the Governor announcing his arrival and proclaiming his dignity, he denounced the servants of the Old Company as

"Thieves and the confederates of pyrates," and stated that four Royal men-of-war were on their way out with the object of dealing with these pests. Waite relied a good deal upon the prevailing ignorance of English conditions to get his news accepted; he relied still more upon the power of the purse discreetly exercised. In this his judgment did not betray him. His readiness to pay hard cash for official favours won for him at once a favourable hearing for his views of the moral shortcomings of his rivals—views which were in complete harmony with Mogul sentiment—irritated as it had been by a long course of piracy in which the hand of the Old Company's baser servants was only too clearly visible. So the ground was prepared for a prolific harvest of misfortune for Gayer and his associates and incidentally for a fine crop of scandals in which the English name was to be dragged still further in the mire.

Waite's efforts and those of his colleagues on the other side of India were reinforced by a Royal Embassy to the Court of the Mogul, the first which had proceeded thither since Sir Thomas Roe's disappointing mission in 1615. As befitted the importance of the event, the arrangements for the Embassy were conceived on a scale of dignified splendour. Sir William Norris, the envoy selected, was given a salary of £2,000 per annum and handsome allowances, and was furnished with an elaborate retinue including a chaplain, a bevy of

secretaries, a purse bearer, and a dozen other personages filling highly ornamental offices. A warship was set apart for the accommodation of the envoy and his suite, and three other vessels of the Royal Navy were sent to act as escort. In most respects this was by far the most imposing effort that England up to this period had made to impress the Indian mind. Strangely little notice is taken of it in history, owing probably to the complete fiasco in which it resulted. Yet it is deserving of far more than casual notice if only for the light that the events accompanying it throw upon the conditions of the India of that day, both as they affected the Mogul power and the fortunes of the English.

Norris, who had been created a baronet by the King for the special purposes of the Embassy, was an offshoot of a well-known Lancashire family seated at Speke Hall. He had sat in Parliament as member for Liverpool since 1695, and it is proof of the considerable regard in which he was held that during his absence in India he was re-elected by his constituents, though subsequently he was unseated on petition. His estimable personal qualities shine through all the voluminous correspondence of the mission, the more so as they are in striking contrast with the coarse brutality and low cunning of Waite. But he was unquestionably ill-fitted in the main for the discharge of the task assigned to him, which required, in addition

to a knowledge of Oriental ways, a capacity for infinite patience and a pliability of disposition sufficiently pronounced to tolerate the inevitable irritants of slow-moving, intriguing Mogul diplomacy. He was what to-day would be called a House of Commons man, and the Parliamentarian has rarely shone as a diplomat on the Eastern or indeed any stage.

At the very outset Norris committed a great blunder by proceeding to the Eastern Coast of India instead of to Western India to reach the Mogul Court. The route, which he had selected by way of Golconda, besides being less direct, was marked by other disadvantages. Its most serious defect was that its adoption placed Norris at the mercy of the servants of the Old Company whose last desire was that his mission should be a success. Arriving at Masulipatam at the end of 1699, the Ambassador was received with "mortifying indifference"—was, in fact, left to shift for himself. He did his best to dispel the coldness of his compatriots—to break down the boycott, for such it actually was—but the forces of vested interest were too strong for him and after months of humiliating delays he was glad to accept an invitation from Waite to make Surat his point of departure for the Mogul Camp.

Surat certainly supplied a more congenial atmosphere for His Excellency the King's Ambassador than he had found at Masulipatam. Arriv-

ing there in December, 1700, he found Gayer at Swally in the Old Company's ship *Tavistock*, and had the satisfaction of making him lower his flag to the Royal Standard which his own ship had at the main. A still greater triumph was arranged later by the thoughtful care of Waite aided by a free use of the New Company's gold. This was the public reception of the Ambassador by the Governor. In all the panoply of High State office, with banners fluttering gaily in the breeze, His Excellency went in dignified procession to the palace. It was a spectacle—or, to give it a popular Indian name, a *tumasha*—such as appealed from its novelty and picturesqueness to the hearts of the pleasure-loving natives.

First came "His Excellency's two flags—the Union and his own arms," followed by four richly caparisoned state horses, twenty lances, fifty guns, fifty bows and arrows, and "the King's Arms flag." Then the spectators were introduced to the musical adjuncts of the cavalcade which embraced "His Excellency's bagpipes (surely the first occasion on which their weird music was heard on Indian soil), a kettle-drum, three trumpeters and four hautboys, and a member of the suite carrying "a naked sword pointed up." The Liveries (presumably the Ambassador's personal attendants) on horseback, and Norris's treasurer, with the sword of State, now appeared to view, followed immediately by His Excellency's palanquin with

on one side a guard of thirty peons carrying silver lances and swords with scarlet scabbards, and on the other more peons bearing shields and fans and similar paraphernalia associated in the Oriental mind with high office. Waite, in another palanquin guarded by men bearing silver lances, was close behind, and then after more soldiers and more gentlemen on horseback, the natives were dazzled with the magnificence of the State Coach wherein rode the Secretary to the Embassy with the box containing the King's Commission and the Royal letter to the Emperor. In the rear of the procession were four other coaches, "the last empty."

Altogether it was a brave display quite unlike anything Surat had seen in its long history. It was, however, largely wasted effort as a means of furthering the objects of the mission. If the Ambassadorial magnificence produced any effect at all, it was only to stimulate the greed of Mogul officialdom, who saw in it welcome possibilities of further plunder in the mission.

Annesley watched with curious interest the arrangements made for the establishment of the New Company's organisation. It is asserted by Bruce,[1] and the statement is also made by other writers, that he actually joined the New Company's staff, but there is nothing in the records to indicate this. That, however, he was anxious to be associated with the venture is shown by a letter which

[1] *Annals of the East India Company.*

he wrote to Norris on the occasion of the Ambassador's arrival in Surat. In this communication Annesley refers to "unfortunate circumstances" which prevented him from waiting on Norris in person to congratulate him on his safe arrival and to wish "prosperous success to his designed negotiations at Court," and then proceeds: "The Honble. Sir Nicolas Waite (I suppose) has informed Your Excellency of my readiness to contribute to the latter (the success of the negotiations) by giving him what observations I collected from the late Generall, Sir John Child, and his several predecessors' transactions with the Emperor for the settlement of the Old Company's trade in his dominions, some of which I hope may be serviceable to you and material to be inserted in your desired Phirman."

It is not clear whether any response was made to this offer. From the tenor of the records the probability is that the New Company's officials kept strictly aloof from the ex-President of the Old Company's factory in order the more strongly to emphasise their entire dissociation from the rival system. Evidence in support of this view is to be found in an entry in the New Company's Consultation Book[1] for October 23, 1701, relative to an application that Annesley had made to Waite for the use of a warehouse for the accommodation of his goods which he had decided to remove

[1] *Surat Factory Records*, Vol. 6.

from this "troublesome house"—a reference apparently to his private residence. "This request," the entry recites, "seems at first but little and very unfriendly to be deny'd to any of our countrymen," but the writer goes on, "the said Annesley signed bonds without leave from Sir John Gayer, his superior, obliging the Old Company securing Terbutt against pirates, and upon whom 'tis said the Old Company has demands, and they at this time by the Emperor's orders under close confinement for what these merchant inhabitants charges upon you (him); Resolved, that the application be refused as no goods belonging to Annesley can be received into the warehouse without entangling the Company's affairs with this Government." Manifestly from this Annesley was regarded by the new arrivals as a person with a compromising past with whom it was best to have as little to do as possible.

For some time prior to the passing of this resolution by his Council Waite had been conducting in an intensive degree the ferocious campaign he had instituted against Sir John Gayer and his colleagues, and the reference in the foregoing entry to the Bombay Governor's imprisonment relates to the sequel to the course of intrigue and open hostility in which the New Company's President had been engaged. After his first manifestation of willingness to fall in with Waite's plans the Mogul Governor had lapsed into seeming indifference.

He had not yet been bribed sufficiently to appreciate the theory so assiduously pressed upon him by the New Company's chosen agent, their broker Rustum, that the Old Company's officials were dangerous characters who should not be permitted to be at liberty. Gradually, however, by the exercise of the usual arts his eyes were opened to the possibility insinuated by the cunning intriguers that Gayer and his Council might evade their obligations by secretly departing from Surat. In order to make assurance doubly sure Waite decided to force the Governor's hand by himself acting the part of policeman.

He caused his attendants to seize Wyche and Garnett, two members of the Old Company's Council, and Richardson, its secretary, and to drag them with their hands bound through the Surat streets to the Governor's Palace. Quite delighted to find the infidels tearing each other to pieces in this way, the astute Governor willingly caused the unfortunate trio to be detained until they found security for their appearance when required—a characteristic device for levying blackmail. Later he summoned both Waite and Colt before him and bluntly asked which of them would pay three lakhs of rupees for the right to trade. Neither gave a very direct answer, but Waite had the double advantage of a clean slate for his organisation and a deep purse, and the Governor's mind gradually but surely inclined in the direction in

which the New Company's President wished it to go. His plans for encompassing the ruin of the Old Company's staff were greatly forwarded by Gayer's unaccountable rashness. By visiting Surat at this time he had, as it were, entered the lion's den, but this was not all. Instead of remaining on board his ship, protected by its guns, he took up his residence ashore at Swally, and so was at the mercy of the tyrant in authority.

Bitterly he had cause to rue his rashness. One morning a detachment of about fifty horse and foot soldiers, led by the Governor's son, swooped down upon his apartments and took him and his wife and several factors prisoners. They were kept in close confinement at the Governor's Palace for a fortnight, and were then removed to the Old Company's factory, which for them and for other servants of the Company was, with intervals of liberty, to be their prison for years. Gayer had no difficulty in fixing the responsibility for their detention. They were imprisoned, he told his employers, "by an order from Court procured by Sir Nicholas Waite, the Harcarra of Surat, and others of that hellish crew."

In a letter to Waite himself, written some time after the occurrences just related, Gayer accused his rival of treachery in betraying the Company's secret instructions to the Governor. He alleged that "the honest broker" Rustum had bribed the guards or otherwise they would have been removed,

and said that the facts would ultimately be revealed in their true colours and the unmasked actors would have to make restitution. "If," he proceeded, "you had wrote us that you would not be remiss in dishonouring our nation in prejudicing every English interest and person in Surat to the utmost of your power and that of other Europeans also, we might have believed you, but the contrary we cannot believe, notwithstanding your scandalous reflection of untoward mischiefs upon the innocent."

In the history of the English in India there is no more shameful episode than this fight between the two rival trading organisations, culminating in the captivity of Gayer and his colleagues. Even judged by the less exacting canons of conduct of those early times, there was something particularly despicable in the incitement by Waite of the Mogul authority to repressive action against the Old Company's servants. It was race treachery of the worst kind, and its evil fruits remained to be gathered for many dreary years in the tears and maledictions of his countrymen. Norris, who was before all things a patriot and a gentleman, emphatically disavowed any reponsibility for the outrage when it came to his knowledge later. He went so far as to raise doubts as to Waite's title to act as he had done, and to intervene on the captives' behalf at the Mogul Court. He had no reason to love Sir John Gayer, but his

sense of fairness was shocked by a proceeding which savoured of the methods of the bravo.

Gayer himself was not by any means free from blame. He had allowed his zeal for his employers to sway his judgment to such an extent that he had set himself deliberately to thwart a mission sent out to India with all the authority that the Crown could give it. In a sense his conduct was treasonable, as Waite asserted it to be, and in other times and circumstances he might have suffered a heavy penalty at a criminal bar in his own country for the measures he adopted. These comprised the setting on foot of an active movement with the express object of preventing the granting of the privileges which the Embassy had been sent to India to obtain. As soon as Norris arrived at Surat he despatched to Aurungzebe's Court an Armenian to intrigue with the high officials and by corrupt measures secure them as allies in the execution of the obstructive policy.

Nothing could have been more mischievous for English interests. In effect the Mogul officials, who never stood in need of any encouragement where extortion was concerned, were incited to put themselves up for auction to the highest bidders—those bidders being members of the same race and the custodians of the same national traditions. The fatuity of the whole business would have struck any one not blinded by prejudice and a distorted sense of fidelity to a cause. But reared

in the narrow school of Sir Josiah Child, in which the privileged position of the Old Company was a cherished article of faith, Gayer was prepared to subordinate everything to the single purpose of keeping the hated intruder out of India.

In happy ignorance of the full extent of Gayer's design for his discomfiture, Norris had left Surat on January 27 for the Emperor's Court. He travelled in a state which befitted the representative of the English Crown charged with an important mission. In his train went sixty Europeans, all fully armed, and an escort of 300 native warriors of sorts with a host of camp followers in addition. Aurungzebe was at the time engaged on one of his apparently interminable campaigns against the Mahrattas, and the Imperial *leskar* or camp was pitched at Birmapoori on the Bhima, where it had been fixed for some considerable time for the greater convenience of the operations in the southern tracts infested by the elusive enemy. A long and wearisome journey of 470 miles through a wild and disturbed region brought Norris on March 7 to the vicinity of the Imperial headquarters.

The Emperor himself was away at Panola, more than a hundred miles further south, conducting in person the operations against the foe. But his Chief Minister, Asad Khan, was in residence, and Norris's plain interest as well as duty was to see him. By an act of stupidity, however, he

passed on his way without paying the visit, an omission which converted into an enemy one who might have been a friend. Norris's reason for conduct which irremediably prejudiced his chances of success was that he was not permitted to pay his call in European state as he had visited the Surat Governor. It was a poor excuse for so bad a blunder, but Norris's consciousness of his dignity was too deep seated to enable him to see that there are times when the greatest causes may be wrecked by a punctilious regard for outward forms. He appears rather to have plumed himself on his implied rebuff to the Vizier, and for a time, at all events, the consequences of his folly were not very clearly apparent.

Aurungzebe made no objection to receiving Norris with the pomp and circumstances of European state on which he set so much store. "Old and crazy" though the Emperor was, he took a lively interest in all that concerned the relations of his Empire with the Western world and was really curious to know what was the precise import of this imposing mission, of which he had already heard much through the Harcoora and other accredited correspondents. His attitude may be described as indulgent rather than friendly. He was quite disposed to tolerate the English on terms, but they must be his terms; he was far too mighty a prince to yield anything out of regard for a power established thousands of miles away

of whose position he had no very exalted ideas. So the audience was freely conceded, and on the appointed day Norris's Master of Ceremonies surpassed himself by providing a pageant of the most elaborate kind. Once more the Union flag fluttered proudly in the Indian breeze, a token and symbol of an ascendancy in India yet in the distant future.

There were other flags and banners and strange heraldic devices, and music in profusion, though His Excellency's bagpipes did not skirl, possibly because His Excellency's piper was indisposed. The presents destined for the Emperor, conveyed in several carts, accompanied by twelve brass cannon, also a gift to Aurungzebe, were objects of curious interest. But it was His Excellency's treasurer wearing a golden key who created the greatest impression. Brains were busy with calculations as to the amount of money which could be unlocked with that glittering key for the benefit of the faithful courtiers of the Great Mogul. It was not long before the question was put to the test. In his wildest imaginings Norris had not conceived the corrupt conditions under which business was normally conducted in Aurungzebe's Court.

Norris's introduction to the tortuous methods of the Mogul Court had commenced immediately after his first audience of the Emperor. At that interview Aurungzebe had freely promised the

farmans for the factories of the New Company in the three Presidencies and had graciously conceded the right to establish a mint in connection with the Bengal establishment. But when it came to putting the Imperial concessions into writing Norris discovered, as Roe found before him, that the drafting of Imperial rescripts was an extraordinarily complicated business involving the services of many officials all of whom had to be conciliated by presents. He used his credits freely, distributing largesse with a princely hand. Unfortunately for him the emissaries of the Old Company were equally active, and their financial backing was as good as that of the Ambassador. It became in time a contest in bribes in which the victory inclined to the Old Company, not because they were stronger, but owing to a fatal obstacle that existed to the grant of the cherished privileges. This was Aurungzebe's fixed determination to exact as a price of the *farmans* an obligation to clear the pirates from the seas. Waite had discussed the proposal in a letter which preceded Norris to the Court. Indeed, it was claimed that he had actually assented to the condition and that the Emperor's promise was given in the belief that the point had been agreed upon. Norris knew that it was impossible to undertake any such liability and in his representations to the Emperor pointed out that the clearing of the seas of pirates would involve the suppression of the Malabars

and other Indian pirates who were amenable to the Mogul power. Aurungzebe listened coldly to these pleas, and in reply bluntly told Norris that "the English best knew whether 'twas to their interest to trade; if the Ambassador refused to give an obligation, he knew the same way back to England that he came."

When this stage of the negotiations was reached, Norris had spent several weary months in the Mogul camp. Out of funds as well as out of temper, he decided to take the Emperor at this word and turn his face homewards. He applied for the necessary permits to leave and obtained what he believed to be full authority to do so. But it was an essential part of Court etiquette that he should have the direct sanction of the Emperor conveyed at a formal audience, and this courtesy Norris omitted owing to the circumstance that Aurungzebe himself had at this particular juncture broken up his camp and started on a campaign designed to secure the reduction of the great Mahratta stronghold at Kelnah near Goa.

At the end of the first day's march the ubiquitous and omniscient Harcoora of the Court called his Imperial minister's attention to the fact that Norris was not following him. Aurungzebe therefore gave orders to Mehemet Khan, the Dewan of the Deccan, to request him to return to the *leskar*. Meanwhile, Norris had made considerable progress on his homeward journey. Mehemet Khan,

after following in the Ambassador's tracks for seven leagues without coming up with him, returned and informed the Emperor of the abortive result of his mission. Aurungzebe, greatly enraged at the flagrant disregard of Court etiquette shown by the Ambassador in leaving without an audience with him, issued orders for the pursuit and detention of Norris and for the stoppage of all the New Company's trade pending his return to the *leskar*. The envoy was overtaken at the end of his third day's march, but he flatly declined to listen to the orders given to him to return. Marching on, he reached Birmapoori, where his old enemy Asad Khan was waiting for him. Reinforced by the minister's authority, the Imperial orders for the Ambassador's return were not to be openly defied. But Norris still held out to the extent of declining to reverse his order of march until his indignant protests against the treatment to which he had been subjected had time to reach the Court.

At the expiration of seven days Norris, having had no reply and being impatient of further delay, started once more for Surat. Anticipating active measures of coercion, he put his little force in the best possible formation to resist attack. The Europeans, numbering now about seventy, marched at the head of the column, and they made quite a brave show, with their guns which were kept ready for an emergency. But Norris had not gone far

before he realised the futility of resistance. His Indian followers deserted *en masse*, and meanwhile great clouds of horsemen gathered on the flanks of his column, threatening at a signal to descend on the little band and overwhelm it. Taking in the situation, the Ambassador sent to the Mogul leader an intimation that he felt compelled to yield to superior force, but he accompanied it with a declaration of his sense of the indignity put upon a peaceful envoy by making him virtually a prisoner. The Nawab in reply protested that Norris was not a prisoner and showed by his subsequent conduct that his only desire was to enforce a further parley with the Imperial officers.

Norris was subsequently treated with ceremonious respect, and when it was found that he was fully resolved to have nothing further to do with negotiations, a durbar was arranged for his reception, at which he was presented with a letter from the Emperor to King William and was invested with a dress of honour accompanied by the substantial gift of an elephant. These attentions were afterwards discounted by the discovery that the elephant was forty years old and practically worthless. But their merit to Norris was that they left him free to resume his march, which he did on February 5, 1702, reaching Surat on April 12, after a journey which had occupied five months.

At the New Company's factory at Surat the untoward developments of the mission were fol-

lowed with deepening anxiety as each report received made more manifest the formidable nature of the difficulties encountered. When at length the news came of the Ambassador's departure from the Imperial *leskar* without permission and without having obtained the *farmans*, Waite sent a strong letter of protest accompanied by some severe criticisms of the methods which had been adopted, more especially by Mr. Mills, the Secretary, of dealing with the Mogul officials. Norris, who was always ready to stand on his dignity, showed keen resentment of this interference in a letter in which he wrote of the President having acted from a "want of good manners and out of an itch of pride intermeddled with matters that were outside his province." Waite, incensed at the tone of the rebuke, retorted that Norris treated him and his Council "more like footmen than persons honoured and authorised by Royal decree."

The feud took a more violent form when Norris reached Surat. Waite not only declined to call on the Ambassador, but flatly refused to adopt the necessary measures to facilitate the departure of the members of the mission. The position for Norris was really a serious one. The sailing season was rapidly waning, and if he did not get off in the immediate future he would be detained in India until the end of the year, a prospect which in any case would have been dreary but which

was rendered additionally distasteful by the emptiness of the Ambassadorial Exchequer. After many acrimonious passages of arms between "His Excellency" and "His Majesty's Consul and Minister," the latter so far relented as to place ships at the disposal of the mission on a personal guarantee being given by Norris in respect of the cost of the voyage. Even now the native authorities remained to be conciliated before the order for departure could be given.

At length having fee'd the Governor and his fellow-cormorants to the extent of several thousands of rupees, the Ambassador embarked with a great display of pomp on April 18, 1702. He was not destined to reach his native land. Shortly after leaving Mauritius (where his vessel had been detained for some weeks) he was seized with dysentery and died on October 10, 1702. In his last hours he dictated to Harlewyn, the treasurer of the Embassy, a letter justifying his conduct and defending Mills, his secretary, from the aspersions cast upon him by Waite. This peculiarly human document concluded with the pathetic expression of a hope that notwithstanding his misfortunes his memory would be respected.

Norris need have been under no apprehension as to posterity respecting his memory. His is not a great figure on the Indian stage; nor is it a particularly heroic one. But he had the merit which belonged to few of his contemporaries of

keeping before him a high ideal of national honour. It was a merit which he at times carried to a fault, and he would probably have been more successful if he had shown a less exalted notion of what was due to him as England's representative. Nevertheless, in the presence of so much that is humiliating to the national *amour propre* in the history of India at that period, we may be thankful that there was at least one who gave to the courtiers of the Great Mogul a fitting picture of an English gentleman.

CHAPTER XIV

The Treachery of Sir Nicholas Waite

Waite's intrigues—Fresh act of piracy—The Old Company's factory attacked—Gayer resolutely declines to surrender —Gayer's bitter comments on Waite's duplicity—Miserable condition of the Old Company's servants—Appointment of a new Governor of Surat—Waite influences him against Gayer and the Old Company—Gayer more rigorously treated—Waite proceeds to Bombay and assumes the office of Governor—His unsavoury reputation in Surat —The New Company's disorderly factory—Gayer's prolonged imprisonment—Emperor's order for the seizure and confiscation of Annesley's property—Annesley placed on the Register—Gayer willing to intervene on his behalf on terms—Waite's career in Bombay—He is arrested by his Council and deported to England—Death of Aurungzebe—Gayer's curious announcement of the Emperor's demise—Contest for the succession between the Emperor's sons—Gayer in disgrace—His death and character.

SIR NICHOLAS WAITE breathed more freely when the Ambassador and his suite had quitted Surat. A great and unbridgeable gulf separated the principles of the two men. Norris was all for conciliation in dealing with his fellow-countrymen who were his rivals: Waite was pre-

pared to descend almost to any depth to discredit and humiliate them. Unquestionably it was this difference of temperament and character rather than the actual circumstances of the mission that led to the rupture between the two men. Waite thought that Norris should have taken a part in intriguing against the Old Company, and he went so far as to accuse him of being unduly favourable to it because he would not do so. He could not understand that the Ambassador's interference on behalf of Gayer and his colleagues was prompted by purely humane motives. He himself suffered from no such weakness. His whole line of conduct from the moment of his arrival in India was that of a bitter and unscrupulous opponent who regarded the difficulties and even the sufferings of his rivals as a legitimate means of advancing his personal ends.

Events in the period following Norris's departure favoured Waite's designs. Towards the end of August, 1703, a European pirate suddenly appeared off the Guzerat Coast, swooped down upon the defenceless native shipping, and worked considerable havoc by plundering some of the vessels and causing others to drive upon the shore to escape capture. When the news of the raid reached Surat, the old familiar scenes were re-enacted. A disorderly mob descended upon the Old Company's factory, only, however, to find the gates closed against them. They were soon followed

by the Cutwal's guards, who proceeded to invest the factory, which they did completely by establishing armed patrols at all approaches, thus cutting off supplies and preventing ingress and egress.

The crisis was so suddenly precipitated that Gayer had been unable to provision the factory, but he resolutely declined all demands for surrender, placing armed Europeans at strategic points with orders to resist attack to the last. This firm attitude had the effect of keeping the military at a respectable distance, but the food question soon became a serious one. Water would also have been lacking had not the factory well been kept in action by a small draught ox for whom improvised fodder was found by utilising the straw packing of wine bottles. On the twelfth day of the siege, when the outlook was at its blackest, Waite with low cunning sought to break down the resistance of the garrison by sending to Gayer by a secret agent a slip of paper upon which was written a warning that it was the Governor's intention to mine a portion of the factory and put its occupants to the sword. Even this disturbing intimation did not move Gayer from his purpose of holding the position at all hazards.

As he afterwards wrote in a letter to the directors, death was preferable to surrender to the Cutwal's

[1] *Cotwal, cutwaul*, A police officer, superintendent of police.

guard of ruffianly Arabs and Turks with the certainty of barbarous treatment in the Cutwal's verminous prison, where they would be ironed neck and leg and chained to beams, the miserable sport of their callous jailers. The firmness shown was not without its effect upon the authorities. On the thirteenth day of the siege the blockade was so far relaxed that a small quantity of provisions was allowed to enter the factory. But otherwise the restraints upon the inmates were maintained with little mitigation of their rigour.

While the siege was proceeding Waite was busy intriguing with the authorities to secure ascendancy in their councils. Gayer's account of his manœuvres sent to his deputy at Bombay (Burmiston) speaks eloquently of the savage bitterness that Waite's devious conduct created in the mind of his rival. "'Tis said," Gayer wrote, "that that Grand Apostate of the infernal regions is plotting to get under the merchant's chops (seals) an obligation from them to indemnify himself from any seizure of the Dutch or others if he send his yacht to Bombay to bring up thence Abdul Guffore's and other country ships there. . . . He may effectually, as he vainly imagines, expose us to the utmost rage of this Government agreeable to his daily councils with hell to cut our master's and our throats at one stroke to promote his unbounded Luciferian ambition." Gayer went on to give instructions that Waite's yacht should

not be permitted to enter the anchorage or to have any communication with the country ships. He continued: "Had we not great assurance of the hellish[1] contrivances of the fore named monster we should not write in such a stile, but the law of nature obligeth the meanest of animals, much more rational creatures, to defend themselves."

Again and again Gayer returns to the subject of Waite's treachery in his communications. He despised and hated the man, and he unburdened his soul in language which revealed the intensity of his loathing. We gather, too, in his reports to the directors at home some idea of the depression which he suffered under at the profoundly unsatisfactory character of the Company's position in Western India. "Thus," he wrote after a recital of the facts of his imprisonment, "Your Honours have an account of our miserable circumstances from year to year, without the application of any redress that we yet hear of or any recruits for our garrison so long neglected. . . . Therefore, if

[1] This word, which sounds very dreadful to modern ears, was used quite freely by decent folk in the early part of the eighteenth century. Thus, the Rev. Samuel Wesley (the younger) in his poem "on the death of Mr. Wm. Morgan of Christchurch, who died August 26, 1732," wrote:

> Who now regrets his early youth would spend
> The life so nobly that so soon would end?
>
> . . . . .
>
> Who but the Fiend who once his course withstood,
> And whispered—"Stay till fifty to be good"?
> Sure, if believed, t'obtain his hellish aim,
> Adjourning to the time that never came.

any evil happeneth . . . it cannot be charged at our door while we are constrained night and day to continue with our swords in our hands, and that which makes our circumstances more dismal is that we know not whether we shall strike when assaulted for fear of all your servants in India being cut off with ourselves that are not in garrison."

As the year wore to a close there came a diversion which seemed to offer a promise of better things. This was the deposition of the Governor for malpractices. But it was peculiarly true of the Surat Governorship that "an Amurath to Amurath succeeds." Appointed by corrupt means and with the tacit understanding that their emoluments were largely to consist of illicit gains, these Mogul functionaries differed from each other only in the degree of their avarice and tyranny. The new Governor, who took office at the commencement of 1704, was a fair specimen of his class. He was not so vindictive as his predecessor, but he had the same measure of acquisitiveness. Waite took good care to ingratiate himself with him at the earliest moment by handsome presents. The Governor was gracious and quite prepared on the basis of the introductory *pourboire* to discuss with him the question of his future relations with the Companies.

Making the best of his opportunity, Waite insinuated that Gayer and his colleagues were very

terrible fellows who would require a good deal of guarding if they were to be kept from slipping out of their obligations under the security bond. The Mogul official, versed as he was in the intrigues of the Court, must have divined Waite's purpose, and he might have resisted it if substantial ground for accepting the views put forward had not been supplied in the form of a bribe of Rs. 27,000. With this money in his pocket he had no sort of difficulty in concluding that the servants of the Old Company must be kept rigorously confined for a further indefinite period. This decision gave Waite what his ambitious soul craved—the Governorship of Bombay. Under the instructions from London, Gayer's continuance in office depended upon his being free to exercise its functions. If he should be in confinement at the expiration of three months from the date of the receipt of instructions the post was to revert to Waite.

Gayer protested to no purpose that in the circumstances in which the change was made Waite's assumption of the Governorship was a monstrous usurpation of authority. The only argument that was effective he scorned to make use of. "'Twould be no hard thing for us," he wrote, "if we would prostitute our consciences, our master's estates, the liberty of our countrymen and the trade of India, to obtain the same measure to be meted out to our natural adversarys that they have caused to be meted out to us, as is apparent, for

we have been courted thereto." Gayer doubtless had not forgotten the costly duel of bribes which had marked Norris's Embassy and had no wish to repeat the expensive experience.

In quitting Surat Waite left behind him a reputation which has an ill savour in the nostrils of any who have a regard for the decencies of life and for fair dealing. Gayer's opinion of him is a biased one, but it may be taken to reflect views which were held by his contemporaries on the spot. In a letter to the directors of December 10, 1702, he wrote :—"Sir Nicholas Waite, who once esteemed himself so great that he was not accountable for his actions to God nor man is now, through his horrible pride, folly, filthy marriage [1] and other vices, become very despicable in the eyes of all men, and though he thought himself fit to govern the world, the factory where he presides is the greatest example of disorder that ever wee believe was seen in India."

This picture painted by an avowed enemy is gross enough, but it is really not much worse than what is revealed of Waite in the New Company records of the Surat factory which he must have had a leading share in compiling. Here we see him one day presiding with all the pompous accessories of the mourning of the time over a special memorial gathering in connection with the death of William III, and the next engaging in

[1] Waite married his niece.

the Council Chamber in a bout of fisticuffs with a member of his Council who had threatened him. Some little time afterwards there is another fracas in which a drunken member of Council assaults a colleague and follows up his initial attack by hurling at his adversary bottles which only narrowly miss doing him grievous bodily harm—to adopt legal language. These lively interludes have their appropriate counterparts in controversies over charges of corrupt dealings and imputations of treachery to the Company which are freely bandied about when trade is dull or the hated members of the Old Company are not occupying attention. The general impression left by these bulky volumes of transcripts written in English exceptionally illiterate even for that day is of a sordid *ménage* dominated by one who was a compound of the bully and the hypocrite.

Condemned to close imprisonment by his implacable and unscrupulous rival, poor Gayer did his best to maintain in his prison kingdom some of the outward dignity which pertained to his position. He was very far indeed from being a solitary victim of Waite's treachery. Lady Gayer shared his captivity, and there were besides in the factory Colt and the other members of Council as well as a numerous body of junior factors and writers and others who had been drawn into the net widely spread by the Mogul authorities when they determined to suppress the Old Company's

trade. A return prepared in January, 1702, showed that the captives numbered 109 persons, including twenty-one English officials of the Company, six ladies, two children, two surgeons, and fifteen seamen. Their imprisonment varied in rigour according to the caprice of the Governor and his myrmidons, but the restraint exercised was always sufficiently stringent to prevent any real freedom of movement outside the walls of the factory.

Annesley apparently escaped for a time the unwelcome attentions of the Government. As the President of the Old Company who had given the security bond, he was, however, a suspect, and in due course the long arm of Mogul intrigue reached him. One day a guard descended upon his house, made him a prisoner and took possession of all his effects. The action was taken at the instigation of the Harcoora, who owed Annesley a grudge for what he regarded as his undue parsimony in distributing bribes when he was in power. Why he should have allowed so long a period to elapse before he exacted the penalty is not obvious, but it may be presumed as fairly certain that the ex-President had rejected demands for the liquidation of past claims which the Harcoora had advanced on the revival of the measures against Gayer and the other officials of the Old Company. The decree under which the Governor acted against Annesley was to this effect :—

"The Emperor Aurungzebe's Husbul hookum [1] to the Governor of Suratt

"29th January
1703/4.

"On the second day of the month Ramzan, in the 36th year of the reign of the Emperor Aurungzeeb, Fuzzul cawn writes at his command to Damur cawn, Governor of Suratt.

"About this time a petition arrived at the Palace informing us that Mr. Annesley, the former President for the Old English Company, having been long since dismist the service and Mr. Colt substituted in his room, was desirous to return home on their ships, as likewise how ye displaced Chief had amassed together great sums of money for the aforesaid Old English Company by piracys, robberys, depredations and terrifying of the True Believers, and having packt up al was in a readiness to be gone:

"Therefore, I signify the Emperor's commands to you that you are to seize upon it and confiscate it to his Treasury and not suffer him to depart."

By virtue of this decree Annesley was, as he afterwards termed it, "put upon the Register," a

[1] *Hasb-ul-hukm, Husb-ool-koskm,* corruptly *Housbul-hookum.* According to command. The initial words and thence the title of a document issued agreeably to Royal authority by the Vazir or other high officer of the Government.—Wilson's *Glossary of Indian Terms.*

form of detention which does not appear to have involved continuous imprisonment, but which prevented the person registered from quitting Surat. The part of the decree relating to the seizure and confiscation of his property was probably not carried out to the fullest extent. If it had been Annesley would have been ruined, and that he continued to trade with fairly ample means is clear from the records. It seems likely that he bought off his oppressors to the extent at all events of saving his property. In the Old Company's records is a letter to Annesley from Gayer apparently in reply to one from the former asking for intercession with the authorities on his behalf. Gayer appears to have been quite willing to interest himself in the manner suggested, but he pointed out that nothing could be accomplished without money, and he required a guarantee that he would be reimbursed any outlay that he might be put to. Annesley's reply has not been preserved, but well versed as he was in the ways of the Mogul officialdom, he no doubt fully expected to have to pay for his liberty and made no difficulty about the undertaking demanded of him.

Gayer and Annesley are here shown on terms of almost friendly intimacy. The hatchet seems to have been buried at least to the extent of the Old Company's President looking indulgently on Annesley's efforts to trade independently. There are several allusions to operations in which he was

engaged at this period. In one instance the transaction related to some diamonds in which Annesley had traded on behalf of Sir Stephen Evance or Evans, one of the Company's directors. Gayer gave his sanction to the despatch home of the precious stones, but he accompanied it with the equivocal comment: "Mr. Annesley cannot forget his old tricks." His old tricks apparently were private trading and sending home his consignments by the Company's ships. The fact that he was acting for one of the directors doubtless had its effect on Gayer, who was always deferential to high authority.

Meanwhile, Waite had taken up his new responsibilities in Bombay. His treacherous conduct excited against him a general feeling of detestation amongst the servants of the Old Company in India. One who was named for office in the new administration declined to accept the appointment, saying that he would sooner be a sentinel at Fort St. George than serve as second in Council under Waite in Bombay. Difficulties in securing colleagues in his Government were only a minor part of the trouble which Waite experienced when he set foot on the island. The settlement had never recovered from the calamities which were inflicted upon it by the Sidhi's invasion. So deplorable was its condition in the last year of Gayer's residence there that only a single horse existed upon the island which he could use. Trade had been

reduced to the vanishing point and the native population consisted for the most part of toddy drawers and a small number of agriculturists and fishermen who eked out a miserable existence by the sale of their produce to the few inhabitants and casual visitors from outside who were in need of supplies. A great storm which swept over the island in the Monsoon season of 1702 had added to the prevailing wretchedness. The tale of misery was completed by an epidemic of fever and cholera which carried off hundreds of the inhabitants and reduced the small European community to the verge of extinction.

It was with no feelings of elation that Waite took up his duties in Bombay. Any exaggerated expectations that he may have entertained as to the added dignity he would enjoy as the autocrat of this little island kingdom were completely removed by contact with the sober realities of the situation he found there. Writing soon after his arrival, he refers contemptuously to "this beggarly but fertile island," and subsequent comments are in the same depreciatory strain. His colleagues were a small body of officials, several of whom were seriously ill and all of whom were infected by the gloom of an exile in which disease and death were its daily accompaniments. The official ranks had been so thinned at this time that the Council had written home imploring reinforcements in terms which would have moved a heart

of stone. "It will be morally impossible," they said despairingly, "to continue much longer from going underground if we have not a large assistance out." The position was made more menacing by the presence on the mainland near Bombay of a great Mogul army which at any time might descend upon the little band of Englishmen and exterminate them. Ultimately the danger passed, to the intense relief of the settlement, but the general conditions remained in the same hopeless state failing the arrival of the anxiously awaited relief.

In his reports home at this period Waite was seeking to justify himself as best he could from the charges brought against him by his rivals. His contention was that Gayer had brought his troubles upon himself by prematurely disclosing the fact of the union of the two Companies and so inviting the unwelcome attentions of the authorities. As for the personal issue between himself and Gayer, he posed as an injured innocent whose character had been blackened by calumnious aspersions, "as if Hell were at liberty and no God to be found." The disorganised state into which the affairs of the two Companies had been brought by their bitter rivalry saved Waite for a time from the consequences of his double dealing. But he was an impossible representative for any self-respecting organisation, and after a few years' enjoyment of the shabby honours of the Gover-

norship he was displaced in favour of his senior member of Council—Aislabie. His departure from Bombay was marked by dramatic circumstances in keeping with his whole career in Western India.

Towards the close of 1708 a violent dispute arose between Waite and the members of his Council relative to some business transactions then being carried through. The Governor, when challenged by Aislabie, the Deputy-Governor, to explain a discrepancy in the accounts, rose in a passion and "protested that he would not concern himself or transact any more business with them (the Council) than what was necessary, which was the ordering the payment of the monthly accounts." "From that day," according to an affidavit afterwards prepared by Aislabie,[1] "he locked up the Consultation Room and kept to his own private lodgings." Subsequently Waite caused one of the protesting members of Council (Phipps) to be arrested, and publicly intimated that possessing as he did the Queen's Commission, he intended to act independently of the Company's orders or the wishes of his Council. Aislabie being, as he says, convinced that Waite designed to seize the island and to take violent action against his Council, decided "for the safety of the island, the Honble. Company's estate and their own lives," to place him under arrest. A warrant was issued for this purpose on November 18, 1708, and executed the follow-

[1] Home Misc., Vol. 332.

ing day. When Waite was searched there was found in his possession a parcel of diamonds, the property of the Company. He was made to disgorge his spoil, and after being subjected to much indignity was shipped off to England in a homeward bound vessel then on the point of leaving.

Aislabie submitted a report of his actions to Gayer with the object of securing support for his *coup d'état* from the Surat Council. Gayer, well pleased to have the opportunity of firing an effective parting shot at his bitter enemy, in due course supplied the Bombay Council with a complete vindication of their proceedings in the form of a proclamation from the members of the Surat Council "to all the Honble. Company's Covenanted servants, officers, soldiers, seamen and inhabitants of Her Majesty's Island of Bombay," intimating that the Governor had been deposed, and enjoining them to render all the assistance in their power to Aislabie and his Council.

When Waite arrived in England he lodged a complaint against Aislabie, asserting that he had been deprived by the Deputy-Governor of valuable private papers. At the outset the directors were disposed to censure the conduct of the Bombay Council, holding that nothing but extreme necessity could justify such violent measures as had been taken. But when the facts relative to Waite's dishonesty became known to them, they accepted the position which had been created, confirming

Aislabie in the office of Governor. Waite strove to secure redress for what he regarded as his wrongs, and at intervals his affairs were the subject of occasional discussion up to the time of his death, which occurred some years after his return to his native land. With his demise disappeared from the scene one of the most despicable English characters that walked the stage of India in those remote days.

Another and mightier figure who had exercised a potent influence for ill on the fortunes of the little English community at Surat also drops out of our narrative at this point. In the early part of 1707 Aurungzebe, stricken unto death, was living his last hours in melancholy isolation in his camp at Ahmednagar. The great object of his later life—the subjugation of the Mahrattas—was further from attainment than it had ever been since he started his campaign with a mighty host more than twenty years previously. Disappointed and disillusioned, a prey to remorse, the forlorn Emperor revealed the anguish of his soul in letters to his distant sons which are amongst the most poignant of the last confessions of Imperial greatness.

"Many were around me when I was born, but now I am going alone," he wrote. "What am I, or why came I into the world? I cannot tell. I bewail the moments I have spent forgetful of God's worship. I have not done well by the country

or its people. My years have gone by profitless. God has been in my heart, yet my darkened eyes have not seen His glorious light. The army is confounded and without heart or help, even as I am, apart from God, with no rest for the heart. Nothing brought I into this world, but I carry away with me the burden of my sins. Though my trust is in the mercy and goodness of God, yet I fear to think of what I have done. Without hope in myself, how can I hope in others ? Come what may I have launched my barque upon the waters. . . . Farewell ! Farewell ! Farewell ! "

In keeping with the spirit of humble contrition revealed in these moving sentences, Aurungzebe gave orders for the last rites when breath had left his body. " Carry this creature of dust to the nearest spot : there commit him to the earth with no useless coffin," were his instructions. His funeral followed strictly on these simple lines. No member of the House of Timur had ever been buried with less pomp.

Outside the Imperial camp the news of Aurungzebe's death produced a sensation difficult adequately to describe. For more than half a century the dead Emperor had ruled not wisely or effectively, but his personality had stamped itself upon the life of a greater part of India in a manner which the lives of none of his predecessors had done since the days of Akbar. We may gather something of the awe and perhaps dread inspired

by the Emperor's death from the curiously mysterious way in which Gayer thought it necessary to convey the facts of the demise and the subsequent developments to his subordinate in Bombay. Sundry letters received, he said, "affirm that the sun of this hemisphere is set and that the star of the second magnitude, being under his meridian and in his place in the ecliptick (while above the horizon), is exalted to his Orb in the heavens. What will ensue on this change of firmamentary lights (proceeded the communication) God only knows, but it's feared that that of the first magnitude, tho' under a remoter meridian and distant place in the ecliptick, will struggle to exalt itself, tho' under disadvantages by reason of remoteness from the former sun's place and want of its warme influence. 'Tis also added that that of the second magnitude is preparing for a swift race to the equinoxial point of this Heaven where these celestial bodies receive their full light." This, being interpreted, was meant to convey that Aurungzebe had died and that his eldest son, Prince Azam, had assumed power, though it was feared that the Emperor's second son, Shah Alum, then in Northern India, would make a bid for the succession.

Gayer's shrewd forecast of events was completely verified. On hearing of his father's death, Shah Alum marched southwards with a formidable force recruited from the northern provinces and

from Bengal. After a brief parley, with the object of getting his brother to accept a compromise by which the Empire would have been divided between them, Shah Alum joined battle with the forces of Prince Azam and gained a decisive victory over them at Jaju in the Upper Provinces. The prince himself was killed and his army dispersed, and though the struggle for Empire continued for some time longer with Kam Baksh, Aurungzebe's youngest son, as the chief protagonist, Shah Alum had no serious difficulty in establishing his claim to the succession.

The change in rulers brought with it no alleviation of the lot of the unfortunate prisoners in the English Factory at Surat. Local authority counted for much in the disintegrating Mogul Empire, and the Surat officialdom took care to preserve to itself its prerogative of fleecing and oppressing the European traders who were at its mercy. Gayer made repeated efforts to secure his release, but for a long period to no purpose. His imprisonment was made the more irksome by the tenour of the despatches from home which were full of querulous complaints as to shortcomings of their servants, as if they were free men conducting the Company's affairs in the accustomed way.

On one occasion when Gayer had been called to account for his supposed neglect in keeping the directors well posted in the affairs of India, the captive Governor made a spirited protest against

the unfairness of this attitude. In a letter dated May 4, 1705, he wrote: "Your Honour's reflections on us for that general news arrives you sometimes before you have it in our letters we humbly conceive is severe considering our circumstances of being close shut for five, six, and more than seven months together, while all persons are forbid on the greatest penalty but death to converse with us, or to bring us or carry from us the least scrap of paper. One that we made use of to conveigle to us and to carry from us by way of a window or some other such hole little notes rol'd up to the bigness of a quill did frequently caution us for fear of being discovered, affirming that he would rather be hanged than taken in the act; notwithstanding which we left no stone unturned to forward advices to your Honour. . . . That want of advices sometimes under such circumstances should procure your reflection without any consideration of our repeated intollerable sufferings is to us matter of great admiration and discouragement, especially seeing the Dutch bought off their imprisonment in Dinant Canne's (Khan's) time with forty thousand rupees and delivered them goods to the amount of four lakh and fifty-five thousand rupees; and Abdul Guffore, when we would not comply in the same manner, suffered the utmost of Moorish tyranny, to which we must add they made themselves easy with their master's money and delivery of their goods, yet effectual care hath been taken

to release them, while we remain liable to be treated as bad as ever we have been."

Many weary months passed after the penning of these sentences before Gayer was able to break the coils of his prison house. His release came in an unexpected and to some extent unwelcome way. In 1707, when the measures for the uniting of the two Companies were completed, the directors entrusted the work of reorganisation at Surat not to Gayer but to Ephraim Bendall, who was his junior in the service. This supersession of the imprisoned Governor was due very much to the same cause as that which had brought Annesley to grief. The Company suspected Gayer of financial irregularities. The gravamen of their charge was that he, having married the widow of Bartholomew Haıris, Annesley's predecessor in the office of Chief of Surat, had put forward a fraudulent claim against the Company based on a false statement of account.

When Gayer became aware of the sentiments of the directors he wrote a plaintive letter of expostulation. Their honours' action in withholding payment of the claims of Harris's creditors because of their suspicion of his unfaithfulness, he said, added to the affliction which he had long groaned under, "not knowing what reason induceth you to deale so severely with me, for that though there were a small error or two in the account first sent you under mine and Council's

hands, they are since gone home perfect in your books, and his (Harris's) credit ariseth chiefly or rather almost wholly from his money paid into your cash by the succeeding President (Annesley) and Council who past their interest bills for the amount to my now wife some years ere I was married to her and long before my former wife dyed, who I esteemed more likely to survive me than I her, which I presume is sufficient to remove all jealousy of my having done anything fraudulently towards the stating of the accounts."

Gayer then discussed the accounts in detail and expressed an earnest hope that the directors would settle with Harris's creditors. The payment, he asserted in some final sentences, would be without any advantage to him: "I not having a pice of his in my hand; neither do I design to appropriate a pice thereof to my own use, but should be glad to clear with all here as well as elsewhere when Your Honours shall enable me so to doe by paying me the ballance of his account."

Gayer succeeded no better than Annesley in convincing the directors of his financial probity. Armed with definite instructions, Bendall, acting in conjunction with Proby, Wyche and Boone, established the United Company's headquarters at the New Company's Factory. This course was disapproved by Gayer, who held that the Old Factory was a far more suitable building for the Company's purposes than the rival and smaller

establishment. But a few days later he showed his appreciation of the changed conditions by sending over to the New headquarters at Bendall's request all the Old Company's servants together with the official coach and the oxen and horse and equipment belonging to it as well as the flags and other emblems of power.

Apparently Gayer continued to reside in Surat for some time after his official disgrace. We hear little more of him, however, until the beginning of 1711, when he embarked at Bombay for his native land. The ill fortune which had marked all his later career accompanied him to the end. The ship in which he was a passenger when off Cape Comorin encountered a French fleet of four vessels. In the engagement which ensued Gayer received wounds, from which he died a few days later. His will, which was proved at Bombay, shows that in spite of his long imprisonment he amassed a respectable fortune. Amongst other bequests was a legacy of £5,000 for the benefit of young ministers and candidates for the ministry, "more especially those holding the same principles as Richard Baxter." Colt, who died a year or two before his old chief, also left a substantial estate from which his native town of Deal profited.

[1] Colt's will (a very long document) appears in *Surat Factory Records*, Vol. 5. Colt left a legacy of £6,000 to be paid six months after the news of his decease arrived in England,

It is not easy to part company with Gayer without paying a tribute to his fine qualities. All through his long and unmerited sufferings he showed an indomitable spirit worthy of our respectful admiration. His loyalty to his employers was beyond reproach, and it stands out in the bolder relief in contrast with the conduct of many of his colleagues who used their positions to subvert the position of the Company whose pay they received. In less strenuous times he would have made an admirable administrator and left a record which might have competed in usefulness with that of Aungier. As his record stands it merely supplies some melancholy episodes in what is, all in all, the most depressing chapter in the history of the development of British power in Western India.

and a further legacy of another £2,000, or Rs. 16,000, to be remitted later to his brother Wm. Colt, of Deal, with the proviso that he should pay his two sisters, Sarah Mantle and Mary Holness, £50 a year each for life. Subject to further legacies including £50 to the poor of Deal. Colt left the residue of his estate to his widow. Jno. Gayer, E. Bendall and B. Wyche attested the will under date June 30, 1708.

CHAPTER XV

Annesley and the Rev. Samuel Wesley

Annesley as a Free Merchant—His trading transactions—Deals in diamonds—Efforts to secure reinstatement—Letter to Sir Stephen Evans, a director, offering to superintend adjustment of the accounts with the Parrakhs—Curious autobiographical reflections—Annesley appoints the Rev. Samuel Wesley his agent in England—Instructions to Wesley—Violent dispute between Annesley and Wesley—Susanna Wesley's defence of her husband—Annesley's obstinate silence.

IN the later years of Gayer's confinement Annesley pursued the even tenour of his way without the harassing cares which had chequered his life from the time that he became President of the Surat Factory. His old enemy the Harcoora disappeared from official life in a cloud of obloquy. The new official, doubtless conciliated by the customary means, was content to leave the ex-President in the enjoyment of the modified freedom which one "on the register" was permitted. Even Abdul Guffore apparently had come to the conclusion that nothing was to be gained by intriguing against him. His position was that of an inde-

pendent merchant—a Free Trader to adopt the classification of the East India Company. He bought and sold when and where he could, and was hampered by no restrictions other than those imposed by the native government and the disruptive conditions under which all trade was done in that period owing to the piracy which was rife on the Indian coasts.

At an early stage of the history of English development in India, before the New Company had appeared on the scene, he would have been an "interloper" for whom no fate was too bad in the eyes of the official representatives of India House. But adversity had tempered the zeal for monopoly which, as we have seen, once burnt like a holy flame in this quarter, and Annesley was tolerated if not encouraged in his independent efforts by Gayer and his Council. Evidence of this is furnished in the records which show a number of transactions in which the ex-President's interests were involved. The following entries, which appear in close juxtaposition,[1] are interesting in this connection:—

February 18, 1704/5.

"Order to Captn. Jonatham Collet to receive on board the ship *Howland* from Samuel Annesley, Esq., one pot containing benzoar and pearls and one box containing diamonds."

[1] *Surat Records*, Vol. 10P.

February 21, 1704/5.

"John Gayer hath transferred twenty-nine thousand and ninety-six rupees and fifty-six pice of his credit with your Honours to Mr. Annesley's credit in your books which is the sum he stands indebted for in said books."

The second transaction is probably the financial sequel of the first, the amount named in the entry representing Gayer's payment of the value of his share in the shipment.

Here, as in other dealings of which we have a record, Annesley is shown trading in diamonds. Those were times when precious stones of all kinds were to be bought cheaply in the bazaars of the Indian towns. Mahratta loot found its market there, and in addition there was a steady realisation of the trinkets and jewellery of well-to-do families reduced in circumstances by the disintegration of Mogul power. It was at about this time that Thomas Pitt on the other side of India acquired the historic diamond, the sale of which for a vast sum laid the foundations of his illustrious family. Annesley had not the good fortune of his countryman, the Governor of Madras, to acquire a stone which carried with it such potentialities of wealth, but he was a shrewd dealer and certainly made a substantial profit. The pearls included in the consignment may have come from the Persian Gulf, whence "the barbaric pearl"

of Ormuz and of Ind was traditionally derived. Benzoar, the once popular antidote or supposed antidote to poison, in all likelihood was imported from the same quarter. It was a common article of Indian trade in those days with frankincense, spikenard and myrrh and other aromatic rarities associated from time immemorial with the East.

Though in many respects Annesley was far better off in his position as an unattached trader, he never lost hope of some day regaining his old status under the Company. He hankered after the dignity which attached to the President's office; he longed probably still more for the opportunities which it brought of personal profit. While matters continued in the disordered state in which they were left by the bitter rivalries of the two Companies and the oppressive measures of the Mogul authorities he had neither the opportunity nor possibly the desire to raise the question of reinstatement. But when Lord Godolphin's award [1] brought about a real unity of interest, he thought he saw his chance of rehabilitating himself. The actual opening for his effort was supplied by the old question of the unsettled brokers' accounts.

[1] The disputes between the Old and the New Companies were referred to the Earl of Godolphin, Lord High Treasurer, who, after a thoroughgoing investigation, delivered his award on Septenber 29, 1708, the immediate result of which was the uniting of the rival organisations with the title of the United Company of Merchants of England Trading to the East Indies.

In addition to the outstanding liabilities of the Company itself there was a claim to a sum of Rs. 1,50,000 on the part of Sir Cæsar Child, the son of Sir John Child, the amount including the fraudulent charge inserted in the accounts by the Parrakhs after the latter's death, to the great indignation of Annesley as recorded in a previous chapter.

Annesley entered into correspondence on the subject of these accounts with Sir Cæsar Child, and also with Sir Stephen Evans, the director, with whom he had been associated in the diamond transaction previously referred to. As an outcome of these preliminary communications he was, it would appear, invited to formulate his views in detailed form for submission to the Court of Directors. The resultant letter which has been preserved is one of the most singular documents of the kind in the Indian archives. Amidst a good deal of ingenious argument on complicated points of financial detail there are many personal allusions and reminiscences which serve to illuminate the character of the writer.

The letter, which appears to have been written in the early part of 1709, opens with a reference to previous correspondence, and more particularly to a communication received a few weeks previously—" a further addition to the many favours I formerly received, for all which," says the writer, " I must ever remain your debtor, beyond the

possibility of retalliation." Annesley then goes on to deal with a scheme which apparently had been discussed by the Court of Directors for appointing a Commission in Bombay to investigate the question of the outstanding accounts, with the ex-President's assistance. He declared that nothing should be wanting on his part to answer the expectations that had been raised, but he hinted that there might be a failure owing to the shortcomings of the members of the Bombay Council who would be associated with him in the inquiry. "If," he said, "they are remiss in requiring all papers of account I shall want, or in summoning persons to be examined as I direct, and they and the gentlemen here be deficient, when the charge is drawn up to demand satisfaction either by the Government or (if need be) a superior power, the Court will be disappointed, and I can do no more than declare how they came to be so."

These introductory remarks lead up to a character sketch of the Parrakhs which gives a very graphic picture of this Banian combination whose fortunes were so strangely interwoven with those of Annesley. "The Parracks (with whom chiefly wee have to do) are," the ex-President wrote, "the heads of the Gentues[1] in this place, and the whole body of them moves at their back in

[1] *Gentues.* The old Anglo-Indian name for Hindoos. The Mohammedans were "Moors."

any dispute with the oppressive officers. They are wealthy, subtle and malicious, as well as powerful; can bribe, devide, menace and by il acts remove those that oppose them, being above shame and uncontroled by conscience. They wil suppress or forge accounts and back it with witnesses or stifle evidence, and know how to time any such artifices as their occasion serves; and when hardly pressed wil fling a part overboard to save the remainder. And what can't such persons do so qualified with an arbitary Govt. where money answers al things?"

The writer passes on to deal with the history of the disputed brokers' accounts: "In the latter end of the year 1698, before the Company dismist me their service, I began with two or three of the up-country brokers under the factory of Broach, and having got their books soon discovered frauds in them to the amount of 1,500 and od rupees. But troubles intervening from the pyrates, I did not proceed, but returned their accts, and gave in what I had done to the book keeper, who I presume has charged those brokers with it. I then saw it necessary to desire Sir John Gayer to get a power Court over the principal brokers to cal 'em to an acct., who began to be alarm'd at my prying into their inferior actions. But what was done in the matter it never concerned me to inquire. Or had I been so curious to do it I should have been thought impertinent and perhaps have been

told so. Nay, now (if I mistake not) 'tis believed I intrude into what does not belong to me and reflect on those in place as if they wanted skil or honesty to manage their trust. I suppose Sir John Gayer knew as soon as I what the Court wrote me, for presently I was askt by a chief person here if I thought Sir John Gayer would suffer the Brokers to wrong the Company, or that they could do it without his knowledge. I could easily have answered his question, but thought to wave it. 'Tis wel if this goes noe further than censure and none in power looks on his reputation to countermine or (which is the same thing) not to back my designs; for then they must fall. 'Twould be a folly pernicious to myself, and of no service to the Company, vainly to endeavour to row against the wind and so strong a current. I believe you received not my packet by the *Albemarle* to have been laid before the Committee of correspondence (with other letters) when I wrote to Sir Caesar Child, May 3, 1707, viz.:—'I almost despair of serving you in your account with the Parracks, for I fear nothing can be done in it but by compulsion. They will be unwilling to part with soe great a sum as long as they can keep it, and to force them will stir up their rage against a private person; and they have power to back their resentments and wickedness to stick at nothing instrumental to their revenge.'

"I think I acquainted you with an instance in

myself of the horrid injustice of these people. The Harcoora (who is 3rd officer of the town) thought me too saving of the Company's money when I was chief, having been less liberal to him than the Dutch, and, therefore, owed me a grudge and took occasion to pay it when I was displaced, boldly demanding 2,000 rups. And because I would not give it to him accused me to the King of piracy, and procured his order to confine me without any examination of judiciary process. An inventory was taken of what they could find in my house as in cases of confiscacion (*sic*) and a guard clapt on me for 22 months. Then, the villain dyed in disgrace at Court, and I have not been since molested; tho' those orders are still in the Registry and must be took out ere I can leave this place.

"This," continued Annesley, "I presume shows what I may expect in my present circumstances if I exasperate the brokers. They might not openly handle me so, but put others upon it, or be secretly treacherous, as those of the fraternity lately were to a Dutch gentleman that came from Batavia by express orders from Holland as a supravisor, whose honest inquisitiveness was charm proof against their bribes, but kil'd with a dose of poison; and I think those brokers have gone on from that time undisturbed.

"I shall mention but one example more. In '93 I was acquainted with a Dutch Fiscal Minheer

Helsdinger who had at home a good estate, but persuaded by that Company to these parts with as ful recommendacion to their chief and Council (that he might inspect their affairs) as could be drawn up and with the same to the General & Council of Batavia, but was forced after an uneasy life for three or four years (and not without danger) to return as he came without effecting anything. He desired me to secure his papers and send them to England, which I did on the *Benjamin* in '96."

In succeeding passages of the letter Annesley deals with his personal position. He wrote:—

"I wish my overland letter of April 1st in answer to yours of Feb. 18, and April 20, 1708, seasonably arrived and you showed it to whom you proffer to be my security. If the Company employ me (as you proposed) I MUST not be LIMITED or HAMPERED by a SUPERIOR.

"In said letter I answered an objection the gentleman in the Committee made to you against my redemption (which is not improper to mention here), that I had brought the Company into a great deal of trouble about the pirates. He reflected (I suppose) on the security paper I gave in '98/9 with approval of al the Company's servants after we had seen the Dutch and French chiefs had consented the same. And was forced from us by the Governor's guards encompassing the factory, and hindering us several days for provisions, &c. I never did hear the French or Dutch were blamed

by their principals for doing it. Nay, I may affirm the Company was sensible of the compulsion and so just to write to their Chief and Council THAT WHAT I HAD DONE WAS WITH MANIFEST HAZARD OF MY LIFE. The way to have settled this affair was to have complained to the King (Aurungzebe) of his officers' oppression, which I should have proposed had I not been discharged the Company's service.

"In this affair I know my back friend, Sir John Gayer, taxt Dr. Colt and Council with the same in Feb. '98/9, and they wrote him if he had been here he must have done as they did. Which tho' he denyd (as it could not be otherwise expected), yet he showed not that resolution two years afterwards, when the Moors brought him from Swally from under the *Tavistock's* guns. But why was not some remonstrance remitted to Court to prevent any il consequences of that paper as the French sent up one of their people and made theirs invalid? I never hear Sir John Gayer was blamed for this omission or Dr. Colt's consent as aforesaid prejudiced him in the Company's esteem, so hope I may meet with as favourable a resentment.

"Pardon me if I a little digress on this occasion. The real cause as you know of my dismission was, as in Sir Josiah Child's expression, that I was not kind enough to the Armenians, which I could not have been and faithful to him and the Company. . . .

"I write not this, sir, from any ambition. I am content with the smal matter I have, and desire my former station onely as 'twould clear my innocency in ye opinion of those who know not why I was displaced and that I may confute my aspersion in the Registry to the prejudice of my memory in the time to come. By this means I could recover a few debts from these country people, make some persons sensible of their ingratitude and others of their calumny; and am certain to do the Company an acceptable piece of service and to pay you some part of my obligations in settling Sir Caesar's account with the Parracks. Without it I fear (with great regrett) I must rely on the Company's and your goodness to accept of the wil for the deed."

Annesley had a good deal more to say in his letter about the Company's affairs, but the only other passage which need be cited is the following very interesting piece of autobiography:—

"I am now in the 51st year of my age and begin to desire a writt of ease after the fatigues of near 32 years in this country, 21 of which has been in the Company's service and 11 since my dismission. From April 20 to Dec. 26, '89, I was imprisoned to the town; from that time to May 6, 1690, straiter confined to the factory in irons; in '91 clapt up again; from Dec. 11, '95, to June 26, '96, the 2d time fettered, and shut then up in my house by a guard from April 10, 1702, to June 23, 1703/4. Near 23 years in my best

circumstances I have been a prisoner at large, and can hope for no better unless the Company redeem me, or I myself buy my freedom, which could not doe til of late that the Moors slighted the Convoy and security papers I signed. Such a continual succession of troubles in an unhealthy climate makes me rather desirous of a quiet retreat in my native country than to continue any longer in India (than is necessary to serve the Company and you) in a banishment from the few relations and friends I have left. I have not only lost my children, but al hopes of haveing more; and to spend the remains of my life in raising a little money I can never here enjoy and know not who will possess, I think is folly.

"Therefore next to my desire for reinstatement is a liberty to leave; it would be welcome as soon as I can with honour and no inconvenience to my masters' affairs, for so I hope I may call them since they have begun to employ me and you are pleased to write."

These are the material portions of the letter which Annesley evidently intended to be at once a justification of his past career and an appeal for reinstatement in the Company's service. It shows the man as he was, a shrewd judge of his fellows and a controversialist of no mean order. His defence against the charges brought against him of having weakly sacrificed the Company's interest in giving the Mogul authorities the guarantee of protection

against pirates in 1698 is unanswerable. The document was extracted from him while under duress, and the Company might have repudiated it on that ground as the Dutch and the French Companies did the similar bonds which their representatives were coerced into giving.

What reply, if any, was made to this letter the records do not disclose. But there is evidence that in the early part of 1713 Aislabie, the Governor of Bombay, proceeded to Surat to conduct an investigation into the accounts of the factory so far as they related to Abdul Guffore's affairs. It is perfectly clear that there was no love lost between Aislabie and Annesley. On arrival in Surat the former summoned Annesley on board his ship to assist him in the investigations which he had in hand. The ex-President excused himself from answering the call by urging that his position as a prisoner on the Register prevented him from "discovering the cheats of the brokers without hazard of his person and estate." Later he so far overcame his scruples as to meet Aislabie and discuss with him the brokers' frauds, which he estimated to amount to £100,000. He still, however, protested his inability actively to assist and suggested that two of the Company's servants then in Surat, Wyche and Wilshire, should make the necessary detailed inquiries pending a fuller investigation in Bombay. Aislabie had to be content with this, but his hostile frame of mind is disclosed in the

comment which ends his record of the episode—"We hope we have your Honours' favourable construction that we have left him (Annesley) without any excuse."

The reluctance displayed by Annesley to assist Aislabie is no doubt to be accounted for by his desire to have the lucrative work of settling the brokers' accounts in his own hands. As there was a commission amounting to several thousand pounds involved, his attitude was not an unnatural one. But though he did not realise the fact at the time, the Court of Directors had no intention of employing him owing to the prejudice which had been excited against him by his numerous enemies.

When Annesley found that no reliance could be placed upon Sir Stephen Evans, he came to the conclusion that a specially appointed agent, who would actively work on behalf of his interests, might accomplish the ends he sought. The decision was sensible enough, but he took the extraordinary course of selecting his brother-in-law, the Rev. Samuel Wesley, to act as his representative, not merely in the matter of influencing the directors, but in his ordinary mercantile affairs. The father of the great Founder of Methodism had many estimable qualities, but the last of his virtues was business capacity. Throughout life he was notoriously haphazard in financial concerns—so much so, indeed, that he was never really free from embarrassment until the grave closed over his remains.

How a singularly astute man like Annesley came to choose him passes understanding.

The most reasonable explanation is that he was influenced by his wife, who had become attached to the Wesley girls during her residence in England, and who, knowing their chronic condition of poverty, may have desired to help the family by putting this well-paid work in Samuel Wesley's hands. Whatever the reason for the choice, the appointment was a grotesque one, having regard to what Annesley required of his agent.

Annesley's instructions to his brother-in-law are contained in a letter dated Surat, March 13, 1713, and forwarded home "via Grand Caire" under cover of Mons. Polavoine, the Director of the French Company in that place. He starts with a curious allusion to Sir Nicholas Waite which indicates that that worthy had transferred his talents for intrigue to the precincts of India House. "I have been told," Annesley wrote, "'twas the practice of Sir N. Waite to bribe some of the Committee thereby stifling all complaints against him. If you suspect that, declare to the Company themselves what I have wrote, being of such vast importance, at their Convention in April to chuse new directors." The absent-minded Samuel Wesley haunting Leadenhall Street to discover whether corrupt practices were abroad must have offered an amusing spectacle, but scarcely quainter than the figure he cut in the companion *rôle* for which he was cast by Annesley

—that of a negotiator of difficult and delicate business affairs.

Here are the instructions he received:—

"Let them (the directors) keep my salary and the wreck's money[1] (some thousands of pounds) till I prove what I write is true, or a great part of it, if they will give me as proposed the power to do it. If you can get 2*s.* 9*d.* or 3*s.* the rupee to be received in England or interest at 5 per cent. (as usual in bills drawn here on the Company) from the time I pay it to payment to you and Mr. Eaton I will give from 10 to 15,000 rupees to their order in Suratt; if they will let me invest it for 'em in diamonds I will faithfully serve 'em. Thus Sir S. Evance and the Jew Alvaro de Costa did to Captn. Owen for his son's money.

"I desired you to let out to Commanders and responsible persons bound hither £500 on each ship, and (if you can) to be invested by me advising overland how much, as in what goods. Procure what consignment you can to me that I may have the laying out of most or part, if not all money

[1] "The Wreck's Money" apparently had reference to some transactions in which Annesley was involved arising out of the wreck on the Malabar Coast of one of the Company's ships. Annesley bought from the local Zanurin or prince the rights conceded by custom to the native power to the possession of Indian owned produce carried by a wrecked ship. The Company declined to regard the transfer as legitimate, and there was a dispute, continued for years, as to whether this "wreck's money" should or should not be paid.

brought hither, which I think I can do cheaper and better than any one in the place. I write not so out of vanity or opiniativeness. . . .

"If I am in the Company's service, pray desire Sir Caesar Child to let me, alone, have the adjustment of his accounts with the Parracks, provided they are not to this time finisht. Mr. Aislabie is most unaccountably slow, remiss and negligent of such advantage, so deserves to have it slip his hands, as I have wrote him I believe it will. Besides, he never did nor can do anything to conclude it; it has and will lye upon me."

Detailed explanations of the various matters involved in the accounts follow. In one passage Annesley again referred to the debt due to him from the Company, placing the amount at "thirty-five hundred pounds," and stating that he would not get a groat of it. He proceeded: "I have saved the old Company 36,200 rupees in Vittul Parrack's demands on 'em on which 5 per cent. is due to me, but I can't get it paid: the reason is plain, that getting nothing for my trouble I may leave off. I was 9 months contending with him. Pray get an order for it."

Annesley was still longing for that "writ of ease" to which he alluded in his earlier letter to Sir Stephen Evans. In direct association with the remarks he made in that communication as to the possibility of his return home may be set this paragraph in his instructions to his brother-in-law:

"If a good purchase offers between London and Oxford of 2 to 300£ a year I desire you to secure it for me against I come home, if God pleases. I would have it a healthy air, near a market town and river; somewhat woody; no religious lands. I will take care to send effects or bills to pay for it."

Such was the formidable burden which Annesley piled upon the weak shoulders of Samuel Wesley. It is not remarkable that the worthy rector's back broke under it. How or when that catastrophe occurred is not over clear. All we know is that a violent dispute occurred which brought Samuel Wesley's agency business to an abrupt end and caused the complete severance of the relations between the two men. Enraged at his brother-in-law's mismanagement and suspecting him of having misappropriated to his own use funds sent over for the agency business, Annesley, after futile efforts to secure restitution of his money, lapsed into an obstinate silence which successive letters failed to break.

As a final effort to move her brother Mrs. Wesley, on her birthday, in or about the year 1720, wrote a long letter[1] making a powerful appeal to him to reconsider his attitude. She acknowledged that her husband was not fit for business, adding—"he is one of those who Our Savior saith are not so wise in their generation as the children of men,

[1] Printed in the *Wesleyan Times* for January 15, 1866.

and if I did not know that almighty Wisdom hath views and ends in fixing the bounds of our habitation, which are out of our ken, I should think it a thousand pities that a man of his brightness and rare endowments of learning and useful knowledge in relation to the Church of God should be confined to an obscure corner of the country where his talents are buried; and he determined to a way of life for which he is not so well qualified as I could wish; and it is with pleasure that I behold in my eldest son an aversion from accepting a small Country cure, since, blessed be God, he has a fair reputation for learning and piety, preaches well, and is capable of doing more good where he is." Whatever might be her husband's defects, the last charge that could be brought against him, the writer strenuously asserted, was dishonesty. Any expenses that he had incurred were honest expenses resulting from the exigencies of the agency business which compelled him to employ a curate during his protracted visits to London. Her husband, she went on to say, was so convinced of the equity of his charges that he was prepared to submit the whole question to arbitration and to sequester the Epworth living in payment of the amount held to be due from him in the event of the award going against him.

He (Wesley) challenged the whole world to prove him a knave. He was not that or anything approaching it Mrs. Wesley spiritedly declared. On the contrary, such was his goodness that she

concealed the wants of her family from him as much as possible because she knew that if he were made acquainted with each particular he would hazard his health, perhaps his life, in riding to borrow money and so save his wife and children from distress. In closing her long letter the writer emphatically insisted that Wesley had not deceived his brother-in-law. "To say the truth," she said, "among all his faults insincerity is not one. . . . Mr. Wesley is not factious. He is zealous in a good cause as every one ought to be, but the furthest from being a party man of any man in the world."

If anything had been calculated to dissipate Annesley's wrath, it was this dignified and beautiful letter, in which Mrs. Wesley's great devotion to her husband and her deep sense of justice combined to give weight to an appeal of singular power. But the old factor of Surat had no petty weaknesses, and least of all admitted any foolish yielding to sentiment. He had made up his mind that his brother-in-law was an untrustworthy person where financial affairs were concerned, as, in fact, he was, and he had no further use for him. He therefore left his sister's letter to answer itself. Nothing further appears to have been heard of him until a somewhat later period when by an indirect channel the Wesleys were informed that Annesley was returning home by a particular ship. In anticipation of a happy reconciliation with their relative, whose great wealth, magnified by common report,

they hoped to profit by, some members of the family boarded the vessel as soon as she arrived in the river. Their disappointment was great when they learned that Annesley was not on board and that nothing was known of him. The probability is that he had never seriously contemplated taking his passage by this ship. What may have happened was that, in pursuance of his avowed desire to return home, he had made inquiries about passages which had led to gossip amongst the Company's servants, and that this had found an echo in Leadenhall Street, whence it had been transmitted to Epworth.

CHAPTER XVI

Annesley's Last Days and Death

The mystery of Annesley's last days no mystery—He gives evidence before the Commission appointed to investigate the Parrakhs' accounts—The Commissioners' unsatisfactory opinion of his evidence—The settlement—Annesley's last years—The Free Traders of Surat—Annesley's influence—The Overland Route—Annesley's diminished wealth—He secures payment of a part of his claims on the Company—Mrs. Annesley petitions the Bombay Council *in forma pauperis*—Death of Annesley—His will—Its extraordinary provisions prove that the idea that he left a fortune which the Wesley family might enjoy if they could discover it is a myth—Mrs. Annesley's death—Her will—The undiscovered Wesley fortune delusion discussed—Annesley's character—The period covered by his career the dark age of the English in India—Changed conditions immediately after his death—Establishment of British power at Surat by Henry Lowther—Conclusion.

THE mystery of Annesley's last days is really only a creation of the Wesley biographers. He did not "disappear"; he was not murdered; he did not turn Fakir and retire to the mountains, where his bones were to be discovered by a later generation of his countrymen. His end, as we shall see when we come to it, was quite prosaic,

and it was known to everybody who were concerned in his affairs or who cared to make inquiry in reference to them. In actual fact, when Annesley vanished from the ken of his family in England he was pursuing his ordinary life in Surat.

A little time before the generation-long dispute over the Parrakhs' accounts had at last come to a head. Matters had not worked out exactly as Annesley had wished and planned. He had not been given the sole responsibility of arranging the settlement. Nor had he been reinstated in the Company's service. But he had been invited to assist in the investigations, and enjoyed the strictly limited satisfaction of knowing that no real progress could be made without his unique knowledge of the accounts of the Surat factory extending over a great number of years. What had happened was that the Court of Directors, after years of discussion, had adopted the old idea of a Commission of Inquiry, and had instructed their Council in Bombay to take all available evidence and invite Annesley to assist in the investigation.

From the reports of the sittings of the Commission preserved in a separate volume of the Bombay records [1] we are able to obtain a fair knowledge of

[1] Diary and Consultation Book containing the transactions of the four members of Council appointed by the Honble. Charles Boone, Esquire, President and Governor of Bombay, to examine into the old brokers' depending accounts with the Right Honourable United Company in Surat.

the course that the inquiry took. Meeting at Surat on February 23, 1718, the four Commissioners (John Clapham, John Hope, John Braddyll and Walter Brown) called Captain Alexander Hamilton and other witnesses. Two days later Annesley was summoned. The record thus introduces him: "Mr. Annesley, being well acquainted with the rise of the accounts between the Honourable Old Company and their brokers at Surat, was desired by the President to assist us in the examining into the several articles thereof for the more ready discovery of any frauds." Then follows an analysis of the evidence he gave on various points. Before the Commissioners had proceeded far in their inquiry it is evident that they conceived a great distrust of the witness. In dealing with one item of account they cite an explanation given by him as "a notorious instance of Mr. Annesley's disingenuity with us." They appear after the opening sittings to have dispensed with his attendance and turned for enlightenment to the representatives of the Parrakh interest, who according to their wont made the worse appear the better reason.

In the result a report was made upon which the Company based a claim upon the Parrakhs for a considerable sum.

For years the question remained unsettled. At length, to the great disgust of the Bombay Council, the directors purchased Sir Cæsar Child's share of the debt due from the Parrakhs for Rs. 1,50,000

and issued instructions for the recovery of the amount. In acknowledging the orders the Bombay authorities asserted their inability to recover so large a sum from the ex-brokers' family. Their honours, they said, had been much misinformed as to the wealthiness of the Parrakhs. They were told on good authority that the children of Venwallidass Bimjee, which was the senior branch of the family, wanted bread, and that the rest of the family were of no substance with the exception of the offspring of Sunkerdass Bimjee, the brother of Venwallidass, whose estate at Surat they had given orders to attach. Finally the debt was compromised by the payment of Rs. 28,590 representing 4–21 parts of the claim. The settlement brought to a close a series of episodes which had intimately affected the fortunes of Annesley, and, indeed, influenced the whole course of events in English circles in Western India.

Before this stage was reached Annesley had settled down to his old career as a Free Merchant at Surat. A broken and disappointed man, with forty years' continuous residence in India behind him, his mind was free from any illusions as to the possibilities that the future might have in store for him. It is probable that at this period the restraint imposed upon his movements had been removed. We find a reference in the records to a visit he paid to Bombay in April, 1716, and to his "shuffling proceedings" in connection with the

eternal question of accounts. Moreover, the East India Company had now obtained from the native power full jurisdiction over British subjects in India, and the grant of necessity implied the removal of old disabilities in the case of individuals.

Whatever his precise legal position may have been in Mogul official eyes, Annesley, we know, spent all the remaining years of his life at Surat. This is shown by the periodical return made to the Court of Directors of the names of persons residing in their settlements. Here the servants of the Company and the Free Merchants are given under separate headings, and it is consequently easy to trace the careers of private traders over a long period of time. One of Annesley's associates, Jeremiah Bonnell, had almost as long a Surat record as himself, and there were others who, from the appearance of their names year after year, must also have made Surat practically their home. It was a small and select community, and it seems to have survived even the worst vicissitudes of Mogul government. On one occasion, when the oppressions of the Governor had become more than usually intolerable and the Government of Bombay seriously contemplated the withdrawal of their factory—a course previously pursued—they were restrained by the reflection that the Free Merchants would remain to profit by the absence of the Company's organisation. Later when the factory was actually closed and the attempt was made to coerce the Free

Merchants to follow the factors to Bombay, one of the number evaded arrest by leaping out of a window.

Annesley, as the father of the independent trading community, exercised an influence which went far beyond the confines of Surat. He had his correspondents in many parts of the East and from them received early news of events of interest. The general system of communication between places in India and between India and Europe at that period left a good deal to private initiative. A chance ship arriving from a distant port often brought information of vital importance. In this manner the death of William III and the accession of Queen Anne were made known in Surat long before the Company's vessels arrived with the official tidings.[1] The East India Company attached, and rightly so, the utmost importance to the transmission of early knowledge of events in Europe to its representatives in India. At least a century

[1] An interesting example of the manner in which news was circulated in India two centuries ago is supplied in the following extract from a letter from Sir John Gayer, dated December 6, 1706 (*Surat Factory Records*, Vol. 101) :—"The Armenians report ye French King is dead, the King of Spain retired from that Kingdom, and that we have gotten a very signal victory in Flanders. This they say." They said wrong, of course, in one particular—Louis XIV was not dead. The other allusions are to the victorious campaign of the Allies, which brought in its train the crushing defeat of the French at Ramillies (May 23, 1706) and the occupation of Madrid (June 26, 1706).

and a half before Waghorn organised the Overland Route for postal communications to India a fairly regular service was maintained by the Company through Asia Minor and Persia. Letters were despatched by various land and sea routes to Aleppo and thence by land to Gombroon, the modern Bunder Abbas, whence they were transmitted to India by the Company's ships or any native craft that might be sailing at the time for Indian ports. To make the system of communication more effective the Company had "news books" forwarded, giving details of the movements of the Company's shipping or any general information likely to be useful. On the Indian side it was the practice of the Company's servants to make special efforts to keep the home departments posted up with occurrences of interest. From Surat *pattamars*, or couriers, were often despatched overland to Scinde with despatches for conveyance by country boats, known as trankeys, sailing to the head of the Persian Gulf, where the Company's representatives would receive them and re-transmit them to Aleppo. Alternatively there was a transmission of letters through the Red Sea and across the isthmus of Suez—the Overland Route of later times. It was by this route, "via Grand Caire (Cairo)," it will have been noted, that Annesley's letter to his brother-in-law, quoted in the previous chapter, was forwarded.

By keeping in close touch with the various centres

of trade in the East and making the most of opportunities which offered, Annesley conducted a very successful business. He must have been a man of substance, if not of wealth, at the time that he wrote to Samuel Wesley instructing him to purchase an estate for him in England in view of his retirement. The rental value of from two to three hundred pounds a year which he named would have represented a purchase price of not much less than £10,000, and taking that figure as an index of his financial position we may assume that he was worth at least £50,000. His affluence, it would appear, was not sustained in his latest years. He probably suffered from the general depression of Surat tradeconsequent upon the anarchical conditions caused by the Mahratta raids. The records supply abundant proof of the widespread ruin, in which the whole of Guzerat was involved, by the roving hordes of bandits which infested the entire area in those eventful years. They spread like locusts over the land, consuming and destroying everything, and leaving behind them a track of almost desert country in which neither man nor beast found sustenance. Surat itself was more than once in imminent peril, and it was only a lack of artillery combined, probably, with a wholesome fear of the European guards in the factories that kept the Sivajies, as they were called after their famous leader, out of the town.

Whatever the cause may have been, Annesley's

fortunes undoubtedly suffered a serious decline in the last ten or fifteen years of his life. His chief exertions appear to have been directed in that period to securing payment of old debts due to him, not the least of which was the outstanding liability of the Company. Success attended his efforts in this demand upon his old masters, as is clear from the following passage in the Bombay general letter of January 1, 1728: "Mr. Samuel Annesley having chosen the President to arbitrate for him in his demand on the Company on account of Ship President's Wreck, the same has been determined in Council suitable to the Company's orders, allowing him on the principal simple interest only from the 16th May, 1716, amounting to Rs 36,150¼ and 21 Raes, which has been paid him accordingly, and (he) desires the Company's countenance in a law suit he is engaged in against Sir Nicholas Waite's estate.[1] The amount thus awarded would have represented nearly £5,000 at the rate of exchange of the time—a sufficient sum amply to provide for Annesley's needs for some years if there were no prior charges to be met out of it. That the relief afforded was only of a temporary character is, however, manifest from the accompanying extract which formed part of a letter sent by the Bombay Council to the Court of Directors on January 22, 1731: "Mr. Annesley of Surat, being very ancient and infirm and reduced to very low circumstances, his

[1] Bombay Abstract Letters Received, 1A.

wife has requested us to represent to Your Honours their melancholy condition, that you may be pleased to order his accounts to be adjusted and the balance paid. We beg leave to represent that his accounts are very intricate and of an old standing, and we believe may be as well, if not better, examined in England than here from the Surat Registers, and from such a scrutiny your Honours may determine on his demands as you think proper."[1] It is not easy to understand what the accounts here referred to were. Possibly they were claims for salary, allowances and commission which did not come within the scope of the arbitration of 1728.

The entry, however interpreted in its relationship to Annesley's claims on the Company, clearly points to a serious condition of impoverishment on his part in his latest years, and that his melancholy circumstances continued to the end is beyond doubt. There are two entries referring to this event which may be cited. The first is a Surat Consultation of the date of June 12, 1732, to the following effect: "A conveyance offering for Bombay (it is) directed that the Secretary prepares a letter to be despatched this day to the Honourable the President and Council of Bombay purposely to advise them of the adjustment made the 8th inst. of Moolnas's affairs with the Governor, and at the same time to write (by an order) to Mr. John Morley, Register to the Honourable Mayor's Court of Bombay, to advise

[1] Bombay Abstract Letters Received, 1A.

them of the death of Mr. Samuel Annesley the 7th inst., and to enclose a copy of his last will and testament wherein he constitutes his widow and relict sole executrix."[1] The second entry runs thus:—

"Bombay General, 28 Jan., 1732/3.

"They advised per Lethieullier (Feb. 7, 1730) Mrs. Annesley had requested them to represent to the Company the miserable circumstances she and her husband were reduced to that they might order some accounts depending betwixt them and him to be adjusted. He is since dead, and the widow has again petitioned on the same subject which is entered in Consultation of 19th inst."[2]

What is the irresistible conclusion to be drawn from these cold statements in the official records? That Annesley left a great fortune which his descendants might enjoy if they could only put their hands on it? The idea is an impossible one, and that it should have been entertained by so sober and unworldly a person as John Wesley shows what extraordinary delusions occasionally enter the best regulated minds where property is concerned. But the evidence that this undiscovered heritage of the Wesleys is a myth rests on surer foundations even than the declarations made as to Annesley's poverty by his contemporaries at the time of his death. We have the indubitable and final authority

[1] *Surat Factory Records*, Vol. vi.

[2] Bombay Abstract Letters Received, 1A.

of the old man's will to show that there was never any fortune for distribution amongst Susanna Wesley's children. The document, as it is recorded in the Bombay archives,[1] is to the following effect:—

"Samuel Annesley, of Surat, merchant.

"Item I give and bequeath unto my loving sister Anne Annesley and to my nephew Annesley Fromantle each of them ten pounds sterling for mourning.

"Item I give and bequeath unto my brother-in-law, Samuel Wesley, Rector of Epworth in the County of Lincoln, and to my sister, Susanna Wesley, his wife, and to their sons & daughters, my nephews and nieces, to each of them one shilling, and unto all or any other of my relations or kindred who may or shall make any pretence whatever to any part of my estate, to each one of them I give one shilling, thereby to cutt them off from every such pretence or pretensions whatsoever."[2]

[1] Bombay Copies of Wills, etc., registered in the Mayor's Court June 29, 1728, to June 3, 1732. Range c.c. cc. XVI. No. 77.

[2] Annesley's will may be compared with that of his father, the curious terms of which may possibly have been in his mind when he framed the document given above. Dr. Annesley, who died at the age of seventy-seven on December 31, 1696, left these dispositions:—

"My just debts being paid, I give to each of my children *one shilling*, and all the rest to be equally divided between my son Benjamin Annesley, my daughter Judith Annesley, and my daughter Ann Annesley, whom I make my executors of this my last will and testament; revoking all former and

There is no obscurity about this: it is a resentful, almost savage repudiation of the title of any of the relatives of the deceased man, save the two specially named for legacies for the purchase of mourning, to enjoy the estate which he left behind. We can only conjecture what the causes were which dictated this wholesale "cutting off with a shilling." They almost certainly were associated with the feud which the old factor had with Samuel Wesley over the agency transactions. Not improbably the relatives took sides with the Rector of Epworth and stirred the old man's rage, ever easily aroused, by representations to him as to the unfairness of his treatment of his brother-in-law. However this may have been, the connection of the Wesley disputes with the damnatory clauses of the will is plainly suggested by the later will of his widow, the language of which is so strikingly similar as to give the impression that it was drafted in accordance with Annesley's express wishes.

Mrs. Annesley, who survived her husband only a few months, made the following testamentary depositions in a will dated February 19, 1733:—

"I give and bequeath unto the maiden daughters of the Revd. Samuel Wesley whatsoever sum or sums of money that shall or may be owing by him to my deceased husband, to be equally divided amongst them, and in case of the mortality of either

confirming this with my hand & seal this 29 of March, 1693."

of them to fall to the survivor or survivors." Having regard to Samuel Wesley's chronic impecuniosity, which must have been as notorious to the Annesley couple as it was to the circles in which he lived in England, there is a grim humour in this legacy made to unmarried girls of the title to an unpaid and unpayable debt. It may have had some meaning which does not appear on the surface, but the plain reading of it is that there was a flame of resentment in the Annesleys' minds so strong that it was their desire it should scorch beyond the grave.

In the presence of recorded statements such as those cited, it is amazing that the legend of an undiscovered Wesley fortune emanating from Annesley should ever have developed. An honest delusion, as it unquestionably was, it can only be accounted for on the supposition that the facts of Annesley's death, including the terms of his will, were never disclosed in England. It can easily be understood why this should have been so. Annesley's estate probably consisted of little more than outstanding debts due to him, the Company's liability representing the major portion. The directors, who had never been eager to adjust the account between themselves and their old servant, may well have argued that this was peculiarly a case in which the old adage about the impolicy of arousing sleeping dogs had force. So the wills were securely entombed with their records and the

Wesley family were left to cherish the belief that the cross-grained old Anglo-Indian brother of Mrs. Wesley had died leaving somewhere in India untold wealth which was theirs if it could be discovered.

Samuel Annesley was not a man whom it is possible to regard with any feeling of respect. The littleness of mind revealed in his will was the distinguishing feature of his entire career. He had not the despicable personal traits of Waite, but he was quite as unscrupulous where money was to be made; and the openings for corrupt dealings were numerous enough in the India of those days. As the years of his exile lengthened he yielded in increasing measure to the enervating influences of Surat. At a later period Sir James Mackintosh described Jonathan Duncan, the then Governor of Bombay, as "Brahminised." The phrase may aptly be applied to Annesley, whose mind worked in the devious grooves of an Indian mentality with a readiness which became very pronounced in the last years of his life. He was not, however, without some good qualities to counterbalance his notorious shortcomings. His philosophic acceptance of all the shrewd knocks that a hard fate administered to him, and his independent bearing in the face of his Mogul oppressors, showed a strength of character which deserves to be remembered to his credit. Few amongst his contemporaries would have come so well out of the crises in which he became involved, and none certainly would have

complained less about the personal hardships which they involved. He was a product of his time—a corrupt, distracted period in which an unscrupulous scramble for money went hand in hand with dissolute manners and a generally slackened *moral* in the ranks of the European community in India.

The half-century which Annesley passed in exile was the dark age of the British in Western India. The transient glories of the Aungier period faded with the death of the gifted administrator. There followed a dismal period of shame and humiliation, of wasted and misplaced efforts and lost opportunities. More than once it appeared that English influence would completely disappear in the welter of strife internal and external in which the miserably reduced communities were involved. The situation was saved more by the incapacity and supineness of enemies than by any exertions put forth by the English themselves, but even when the worst crises had been passed there was no real progress made towards the development of a stable position. A dull dead level of mediocrity marked the administration of affairs in Bombay, and at Surat and other outposts of trade the factory records were mere registers of an attenuated and fluctuating trade conducted under conditions which varied with the characters of the members of a kaleidoscopic officialdom, but which were at no time really satisfactory.

It is a singular fact that Annesley's career in

India ended almost exactly at the moment when a new departure was made which was the true beginning of the policy which was ultimately to give the British ascendancy in the affairs of Western India. In the official announcement of his death given above an allusion will have been noted to "the adjustment of Moolnas's[1] affairs with the Governor." This had reference to a violent dispute then raging as to the exactions of Sohrab Khan, the Mogul representative, an avaricious tyrannical official whose conduct had excited against him a strong opposition amongst all classes of traders. The arrangement made with the oppressor became as other compacts of a similar character had done, a mere stepping-stone to further tyranny. Then the discontent came to a head in a concerted movement to depose Sohrab Khan in favour of Tedje Beg Khan, a prominent Mogul notable, who had for some time been an aspirant to the chief office, and who was held in esteem by the traders, though actually he does not appear to have differed greatly in character from his rival. On June 22, sixteen days after Annesley's death, the conspirators met at Moolnas's house to organise resistance, and later

[1] Moolnas was Abdul Guffore's grandson. On the death of Annesley's arch enemy at the close of 1716 the Governor swooped down upon his estate and confiscated it under the pretence that there were no heirs. Moolnas went to Court and appealed against the misappropriation with success. Afterwards he became a leading man in Western India and even aspired to the Governorship.

the same day hostilities were commenced. They were continued throughout the night, the advantage inclining in favour of the party of revolt.

At this juncture the affairs of the British factory were presided over by Henry Lowther, a cadet of the Yorkshire branch of the well-known Cumberland family and an ancestor of the present Speaker of the House of Commons.[1] Lowther was a man of

[1] Henry Lowther was the second son of Sir Wm. Lowther, Bart., of Swillington, Yorks, M.P. for Pontefract 1701–10 and 1715–29. I have had some difficulty in establishing his identity owing to the absence of his name from the Dictionary of National Biography and the confused statements made by Burke and other authorities concerning Sir Wm. Lowther's sons. In the published pedigrees Sir Wm. Lowther's second son, Henry, is described as "of Newcastle M.D.," and to add to the confusion his brother John appears in the guise of "Governor of Surat," an impossible position, as the Governors of Surat were Mohammedan officials appointed by the Mogul Emperor. In my perplexity I ventured to appeal for enlightenment to the Right Hon. J. W. Lowther, M.P., the Speaker, and the courteous response made to my application enables me to state authoritatively that Henry Lowther was not the M.D. of Newcastle, but the chief representative of the East India Company's Factory at Surat. The fact is first attested by the grand pedigree of the Lowther family at Lowther, in Cumberland, which has the following: "Son of Sir Wm. Lowther, of Pomfret, M.P., Henry Lowther, Governor of Surat; married daughter of —— Baley, Died 1743." In a family memorandum book is the following additional information :—"Henry, the next brother, was sent when young into the East Indies, and became Chief of Surat; but meeting with great losses from ill Persons whom he trusted, and withal living there in great state and pomp, he returned home without

energy, and he had the foresight to perceive that an opportunity offered of advancing British interests by taking a hand in bringing about the overthrow of the Governor under whom the Company's servants in common with other traders had so long suffered.[1] He proceeded to carry out his plans with a thoroughness which was a guarantee of their final success. Breastworks were thrown up round the factory and the buildings composing it were put in the best possible condition to resist attack. At the same time he enrolled 200 fighting men to supply garrisons for the defences.

As the fight between the two factions in the city waxed warmer the defensive efforts of Lowther became merged in the general offensive of the "rebels." One of the city bastions was manned by the Company's troops, and they had some rather

any Fortune; he married M[a]., the Dr. of Captn. Baley, while abroad. He died at Easton Parva, in Essex, at a House of Lord Maynard's, his Uncle, in 1758, leaving no Issue, and buried there, his Widow still living at that Place." It will be noted that there is a curious discrepancy of fifteen years in the dates assigned for Henry Lowther's death by the pedigree and the memorandum respectively.

[1] The facts are taken from the "Diary of Henry Lowther, Esq., Chief for Affairs of the Right Honble. United Company of Merchants of England Trading to the East Indies, and Council residing in their Factory at Surat, and subordinate to the Honble. Robert Cowan, Esq., President of the Coast of India, Persia and Arabia, Governor & Commander in Chief of His Majesty's Castle & Island of Bombay, Council."

stiff fighting, with the result that an Englishman and three country soldiers were killed. For several days the struggle continued inconclusively. On the 24th Moolnas, fearing that after all he might have taken the wrong side, withdrew his support. The position would now have been serious had not Lowther come to the rescue and by furnishing the adherents of Tedje Beg Khan with artillery and ammunition completely restored the balance.

Now the British became more closely concerned in the operations, and when on the 26th the Governor's forces made a formidable attack all along the line the Company's men rallied to the charge with such spirit that the enemy retreated precipitately, leaving eleven large guns and sundry ammunition in British hands. Sohrab Khan by this time had had his fill of fighting and sought an accommodation with Lowther. He was curtly told "that the merchants had already concerted measures to secure their liberty and estates which they were resolved to put in execution."

A lull now ensued in the fighting which was taken advantage of by Lowther to strengthen the forces of the allies by supplying them with skilled artillery-men. The effect of this action was speedily visible in a more accurate and intensified bombardment of the enemy's positions. On the night of the 28th some of the shots were dropped in the Governor's Palace greatly to the alarm of the inmates. On three succeeding days the contest continued without

any material change. By this time ammunition was running short in the British lines and an urgent message was despatched to Bombay for further supplies and reinforcements. On July 2 Lowther, by invitation, visited Tedje Beg Khan who warmly thanked him for the great assistance he had rendered and paid him the special compliment of asking his advice as to the best methods of conducting a general assault on the enemy's positions which he had in contemplation. Lowther suggested that the Nawab's forces should be divided into four, one section being employed to make a direct attack on the centre and the other three sections being utilised in flank operations.

This plan of campaign was promptly adopted with triumphant results. Three lines of entrenchments were carried, and by the end of the day the Governor's Palace was practically invested. Sohrab Khan, however, was by no means disposed of. He fought on resolutely and maintained quite a brisk fight against the Dutch Factory which was only saved from capture by British assistance. Meanwhile serious financial trouble had developed which threatened to nullify the success that had been achieved. Again Lowther saved the situation by taking the initiative in raising Rs. 50,000, of which the Company's funds contributed Rs. 30,000, for the prosecution of the operations. This was the decisive factor in the struggle. Sohrab Khan fled from the field leaving the Governorship in the

hands of his rival who was duly acclaimed by the British and presented with the usual *nuzzur* of seven mohurs in recognition of his claims to their allegiance.[1]

The victory thus gained almost entirely by British aid sounded the death-knell of the reign of tyranny under which the European traders in Surat had so long suffered. Never again were Englishmen to be put in irons and led captives through the Surat streets, the sport of an enraged populace; no future Annesley or Gayer was to languish for years in irksome confinement as hostage for the satisfaction of extortionate demands. The British now held their heads high and commanded where before they had alternately humbly pleaded and impotently threatened. The line of independent Governors of Surat which was established by Tedje Beg Khan existed on British sufferance, and when the time came, as it did before the century was much more

[1] Henry Lowther's services on this occasion met with a poor requital at the hands of his masters. When the Court of Directors heard of "the surprising revolution" they sent out a querulous despatch saying they "would have their servants be very wary in matters of such moment." They should, the despatch said, "if possible keep neuter in all such cases unless the Company's property was invaded, and upon that happening the old practice should be followed of blockading the port, by which the Mogul authorities would be brought to reason without the English engaging in a civil war." On March 11, 1735, Henry Lowther and five other officials were dismissed the Company's service "for gross mismanagement at Surat."

than half gone, when these self-appointed rulers had made themselves impossible by their oppression and misgovernment, they were thrust on one side by the strong British hand to make way for the ordered administration which has ever since swayed the destinies of the fertile lands of Guzerat, of which Surat for many generations was the chief trade centre.

It is naturally on this later picture of peace and good government that the British historian is most disposed to dwell; but the earlier period, marked though it was by disgrace and failure, must also be studied if we would obtain a correct view of the development of British influence in India. The Surat of Annesley's fifty years' term of exile was typical of an India of change and decay. The old Mogul order was passing and the great anarchy was spreading over the land inviting the intervention of the power which was ultimately to evolve out of chaos the present majestic fabric of Indian Government. In this mighty transformation the part played by the English of the time was a strictly subordinate one, but it was the knowledge gained by the bitter experience of their contact with the disruptive forces then at work in India that supplied the groundwork of the policy which later resulted in the epoch-making victory of Plassy. Annesley and his fellows were the rude pioneers of a great advance—the unfortunates who fall by the way overwhelmed by the initial difficulties. Their

achievements appear of little account if an isolated view is taken of them, but seen in a wide perspective they drop into their places as essential parts of a mighty whole.

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